Wandering Women and Holy Matrons

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Wandering Women and Holy Matrons

Women as Pilgrims in the Later Middle Ages

By
Leigh Ann Craig

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On the cover: Image from Oxford, MS Bodley 277, folio 367v, woodcut portraying King Henry VI of England being venerated by both male and female pilgrims to his shrine at Windsor, c. 1496. (Copyright: the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.)

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For Sue, Mattie, Ella, Ginny, and all the women
who teach me about the path ahead;

for Cari, Sara, Kathleen, Hanne, Anna, Dot, and all the women
who walk beside me;

and for my beautiful Anneke and my beautiful Sofia,
who watch us all to learn the way.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In November of 1395 in the Pomeranian village of Dirschau, Margaret, the wife of Laurence, finally took action to end her years of suffering. According to the papal investigators who recorded her story eight years later, she had been "gravely ill" for fifteen years with an ongoing uterine hemorrhage. This condition had not only impaired her health, it had also disrupted Margaret and Laurence's sexual relationship for that entire decade and a half. Margaret therefore sought supernatural help in solving her problem.

> Having heard the fame of the shining miracles performed by the virtue of the blessed Dorthea of Montau, she set out to visit her shrine. And having sought permission from her husband she reported his severe response to her, saying "If only all the demons would tear you to bits!" She, going to the shrine with great devotion, and with great devotion arranging her body in the form of a cross, pressed her outstretched arms to the walls, saying, "O blessed Dorothea! I do not wish to leave your grave, unless you secure for me a return to perfect health. God knows that I suffer from a great and severe infirmity." With that said, she was heard about the matter, and through the merits of blessed Dorthea she was restored to perfect health. And leaving with joy and returning to her home thus cured, she was received by her husband most gratefully.[1]

If we set aside for the moment modern skepticism regarding the possibility of miracles, Margaret's story is still a confusing one on two levels. The first point of fracture is the strange response of her husband to her

[1] Richard Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau von 1394 bis 1521* (Vienna: Bohlau Verlag, 1978), 30: "…audita fama miraculorum coruscantium in virtute beate Dorthee disposuit visitare eius sepulchrum. Et petita licentia ab eius viro grave responsum reportavit eo dicente: 'Omnes demones utinam te divideret!' Que cum maxima devotione ad dictum sepulchrum accedens, maxima devotione accensa corpus suum in modum cruces brachiis extensis parieti affixit dicens: 'O beata Dorothea! Nolo recedere a tuo sepulchro, nisi impetraveris me pristine restitui sanitati. Scit Deus, quod magnam et gravem patior infirmitatem.' Quibus verbis dictis illico fuit exaudita et meritis beate Dorothee sue pristine restituta sanitati. Que exiliens cum gaudio ad domum reversa, sic curata a marito suo gravissime est recepta."

request to seek healing through pilgrimage. Laurence's callous consignment of his wife to "all the demons" seems not only unkind, but also counterintuitively careless of his own best interests. Margaret's illness had interrupted their marital intimacy for fifteen years; why would he not want her to be healed? One might perhaps suspect that he did not care about his wife, or even that he wished her ill; but if that were so, then why did he reverse his negative opinion of her travel so easily when she returned home in good health? The nature of the domestic strife in this small drama requires clarification.

The second snag in the story's logic is a procedural one: if Margaret's husband responded to her request for permission to become a pilgrim only with his permission for her to be shredded by infernal beings, how was it that (in the very next sentence) Margaret set off on her journey anyway? The manner in which she overcame Laurence's opposition is unclear. Had he in fact denied her permission to travel with his curse, or was he simply voicing his anger and frustration over a decision he knew he was not able functionally to oppose? Either way, how was it that eight years later Margaret was able to tell her story of having so angered her husband to an audience of clerics, and yet those clerics were sympathetic enough to her point of view to record her devotion and her suffering—and her husband's reversal of his "severe response"—in some detail? Not only does the couple's relationship demand our attention, but so too does the framework of social pressures within which that relationship functioned.

Of these discontinuities, it is Laurence's ire that may be most easily explained. By 1395, Latin Christian culture had come to associate a series of stereotypical problem behaviors with women who undertook voluntary pilgrimages. According to later medieval critics of the practice, devotional journeys could serve as convenient opportunities for Christians to misbehave. Since women were believed to have more natural inclination toward misbehavior than men, they were doubly suspect as pilgrims. This suspicion was reinforced by a general expectation that women should lead private and immobile lives. There were some medieval women who lived with little restriction on their mobility (for example, prostitutes), and there were others who periodically overcame such restrictions, but the majority of medieval women were expected to remain enclosed within certain physical spaces most of the time.[2]

[2] On prostitution, see Bronislaw Geremek, *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris*,

As such, condemnations of female pilgrims, and indeed of any woman who indulged in public mobility, appeared in the poetry, courtesy literature, sermons and sermon exempla, and art of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Given that these assumptions lurked in the cultural shadows, Laurence might have interpreted his wife's request to travel as the equivalent of a request for permission to damage his reputation. His anger suddenly becomes comprehensible.

Still, as Edward Peters has pointed out, "for every moral stricture against travel medieval western Europeans could offer a ready-made counter-argument."[3] This was as true for women as for men. Women—not just extraordinary women such as saints and queens, but also ordinary ones such as Margaret—*did* become pilgrims. An exploration beyond the attacks of angry husbands and ribald satirists reveals that pilgrimage, a remarkably flexible form of ritual, was available to women under a number of guises. Further, perceptions and depictions of these practices were as varied as the rituals themselves. Medieval writers were nearly as likely to celebrate the pilgrimages of women as they were to condemn their participation. Although satirical tracts warned against allowing women to wander, travel narratives and miracle stories recorded women's presence, and either implicitly or explicitly supported them. Further, pilgrimage rituals carried out through a proxy object or person were readily available to women. Indeed, women were at times even forced to become pilgrims by their communities or by clerical authorities.

Margaret's story is an excellent example of this ambiguity. Despite her husband's initial response, her experiences were recorded by a clerical author keenly interested in presenting her choices in a favorable light; the author sympathized with her "great suffering," dwelled on her "great devotion," and ended the story with her husband's belated and unexplained change of heart. I would contend that both Margaret's ability to travel without her husband's support and her husband's eventual gratitude can be explained by the fact that women's pilgrimages

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trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). On the spatial limitations imposed on medieval women, see Barbara Hanawalt, "At the Margins of Women's Space in Medieval Europe," in *Matrons and Marginal Women in Medieval Society*, ed. Robert E. Edwards and Vickie Ziegler (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1995), 3.

[3] Edward Peters, "The Desire to Know the Secrets of the World," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62, no. 4 (2001): 604.

were located at a nexus of conflicting ideals. As a woman, Margaret was supposed to remain in the home, carefully overseen, fulfilling her most significant function by caring for the needs of her family, and so her travel could be interpreted as a dereliction of duty. On the other hand, as a pilgrim, she was performing a meritorious and, from the point of view of her physical health, vitally necessary act of Christian devotion. The fact that her act of devotion, sacrifice, and penance actually earned her the miraculous healing that she sought was presented as proof that the saints and God viewed her pilgrimage in this more favorable sense. The theology surrounding pilgrimage, then, had encoded within it the basis upon which to interpret the pilgrim and her pilgrimage in a positive manner. With the return of a healthy wife, Laurence may well have retracted his mistrust, and substituted instead a divinely-reinforced interpretation of her trip as devout, penitential, and beneficial to her household and community. This fluidity in potential readings of female pilgrims left room for women to participate in a variety of forms of pilgrimage, and for both women's social circles and the authors who recorded their stories to respond in either a positive or a negative fashion.

The multivalent nature of pilgrimage has generated an equally wide range of modern interpretations of the practice. Anthropologists have described pilgrimage as a unifying practice, one that creates a sense of community and even equality among strangers.[4] More recent anthropological inquiry challenged this concept of uniformity in pilgrimage, seeing the process instead as an amalgamation of "competing religious and secular discourses" which were as apt to clash as to agree.[5] Medieval pilgrimage has also been characterized as a practice that duplicated and hence strengthened quotidian social hierarchies, rather than erasing them.[6] This study uncovers examples of each of these patterns. To these I would add another: that the ambiguity surrounding women's participation in pilgrimage could at times also function to exacerbate social divisions, creating exceptionally fierce resistance to women's presence. Whether a woman experienced misogynist resistance, camaraderie and

[4] Victor and Edith Turner's landmark study *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978) has been the foremost example of this point of view.

[5] John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow, eds., *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 7.

[6] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 151.

support, or a reaffirmation of her traditional roles as a woman depended both upon the circumstances of her pilgrimage and upon her success in simultaneously performing the roles of woman and of pilgrim to the satisfaction of multiple audiences with conflicting agendas.

In the space created by this ambiguity, women's voices, as raised in their performance of pilgrimage ritual and in their collaborations in the retelling of their experiences, were among those which helped shape interpretations of their travels. At times, women were able to use aspects of the cultural ideals of both the pilgrim and the woman to help fashion a strongly positive representation of themselves and their endeavors. Such women and their supporters demonstrated that pilgrimage, instead of being a danger to a woman's well-being, could be a natural and even necessary extension of her caregiving duties. Indeed, a woman's spiritual status could be raised by her participation in devotional travel nearly to that of a saint. This study will explore negative images of wanderers, positive portrayals of devout female pilgrims, and more contested cases, as well as the range of complex social pressures in which these interpretations were enmeshed.

Even after years of attention to this project, the question of why one should care about a group as narrowly-defined as women who became pilgrims in the later Middle Ages still looms large in my own mind, and I wish to address it plainly. As a subjective, human, female reader, my first inclination is to feel that Margaret is of interest for her own sake. She was a living person, and she had an unusual and powerful personal experience that was related to her bodily womanhood, and on both counts I find her story compelling. As a medievalist whose scholarly interest is in women, I find Margaret and women like her to be important because they represent a rare find in our sources. Margaret was an unremarkable person—neither an educated nun, nor a powerful queen, nor a venerated holy woman—who was able to seek out, describe, and celebrate an unusual religious experience. Her story, however incomplete it may be, speaks to us about the ways in which Christian devotion touched a very ordinary life. Since Christianity was the single most important cultural vocabulary in use throughout the Middle Ages, this offers a new perspective on the cornerstone of my field of study.

On the other hand, because I am an historian of women, Margaret also demands my attention because she is a fine example of the operation of social norms in women's lives. In her story we see both what was *expected* of a peasant wife in fourteenth-century Pomerania,

and also what it was *possible for her to negotiate.* As we shall see, the fact that her story was recorded, even if it was recorded using the words, signs, and assumptions of male clerics, shows that she was not only able to shape her own experience (i.e., become a pilgrim in the face of her husband's resistance) but also that she was able to contribute to the larger dialogues about the Blessed Dorthea of Montau, about miracles, about bodily womanhood and wifehood, and about female pilgrims. Medieval culture may have held women at a social, economic, and legal disadvantage, but they were nonetheless human beings like ourselves, fully equipped with all the intelligence and agency that goes with our sophisticated brains and highly complex social behavior. This intelligence and agency, when applied both to immediate actions and to feats of memory and storytelling, made an enormous contribution to the larger cultural edifice in medieval Europe as in all other times and places. Margaret, and women like her, can help us map out one example of the give-and-take of gender and culture in a highly nuanced fashion.

Medieval Women as Pilgrims

Even the earliest records of religiously-motivated travel in the Christian tradition feature women prominently. The late Antique Christian community was strongly inclined towards such travel well before there was a clear dichotomy between monastic journeys (taken for purposes of asceticism, as penance, and in search of religious mentors) and pilgrimage (taken for the purpose of visiting a particular shrine). In her study of religious travel in late Antiquity, Maribel Dietz noted that "women, in their roles and travelers and patrons, emerged as a crucial element in the source material….the conjunction of travel, monasticism, and patronage seems to have been particularly appealing to women."[7] While Dietz reclassifies late Antique women such as Helena, Egeria, and Melania the Elder as monastic travelers rather than pilgrims in the purest sense, she notes two themes that persist in the history of women's religious travel: first, that women avidly participated in such

[7] Maribel Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300–800* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 8.

travel, and second, that their participation provoked a complex response, ranging from the questionable attribution of the first Jerusalem pilgrimage to St. Helena to Jerome's dour commentary on an unnamed woman traveling to Jerusalem.[8] Pilgrimages to the shrines of miracle-working saints were also of great interest to early Christian women. Peter Brown has noted that among the many breaks with tradition that Christianity brought to the late Antique Mediterranean was the public participation of women in pilgrimages and festivals associated with the localized cult of the saints.[9] Indeed, in his discussion of the early tension over the potential privatization of the saints' cults, Brown gives three examples of wealthy Romans living between the late third and the early fifth centuries whose privatized control over relics threatened the unity of the local Christian community. All of these overmighty patrons were women.[10] Thus, from the earliest point where Christian travel and pilgrimage were practiced, women were both participants in and authors of new devotional practices, and their participation aroused varied responses.

While we have few pilgrimage records from the sixth and seventh centuries because of the disruptions of the Germanic invasions, it is clear that the volume of pilgrims once again rose after 700 C.E., and that women as well as men took sacred journeys. Indeed, some excellent records from this period describe the pilgrimages of women: letters between St. Boniface and several eighth-century Anglo-Saxon nuns who took pilgrimages to Rome.[11] Such records express profound concerns for women's well-being in this more turbulent, post-Roman world. Arrangements were made to see that groups of female pilgrims were protected.[12] Perhaps the most oft-quoted complaint ever made by a cleric about female pilgrims was voiced in 747 C.E. by St. Boniface in a letter to Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury:[13]

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[8] Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims*, 110–120, 131. For more discussion of the divided feelings of late Antique Christian leaders about pilgrimage more generally, see Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering the Sacred: The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[9] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 43–4.

[10] Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, 33–4.

[11] Julie Ann Smith, "Sacred Journeying: Women's Correspondence and Pilgrimage," in J. Stopford, ed., *Pilgrimage Explored* (York: York Medieval Press, 1999), 42.

[12] Smith, "Sacred Journeying," 43.

[13] Ephraim Emerton, ed. and trans., *The Letters of St. Boniface* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 140.

> Finally, I will not conceal from your Grace that all the servants of God here who are especially versed in Scripture and strong in the fear of God agree that it would be well and favorable for the honor and purity of your church, and provide a certain shield against vice, if your synod and your princes would forbid matrons and veiled women to make these frequent journeys back and forth to Rome. A great part of them perish and few keep their virtue. There are very few towns in Lombardy and Frankland or Gaul where there is not a courtesan or harlot of English stock. It is a scandal and a disgrace to your whole church.

Clearly, social concerns about women's unsupervised travel had already come into play. But note that Boniface targets 'matrons and veiled women' as the types of women who engaged in long-distance pilgrimages; his perception suggests that in the early Middle Ages the noticeable female pilgrims were widows and nuns—women who had no direct male authority looking after them, and who potentially had no family to see to.

The popularity of pilgrimage was given a tremendous boost by a number of developments in the high Middle Ages. Sumption called the period after the first millennium "the great age of pilgrimage," during which the lay nobility took an interest in long-distance pilgrimage as an element of their devotional regimen.[14] In the case of the Jerusalem pilgrimage in particular, this interest was soon to be fueled by the Crusades, mass armed pilgrimages to Palestine that began in 1095. The pilgrimage to Rome may have been shrinking somewhat at the same time because pilgrims were diverted toward both crusading and the new pan-European shrine at Santiago de Compostela in Spain, but it was reinvigorated in the thirteenth century by the papacy's declaration of increasingly large indulgences, culminating in the plenary indulgence offered by Pope Boniface VIII in the Jubilee of 1300.[15] Meanwhile, shorter pilgrimages were also growing in popularity. The cult of the saints, which provided the other major pilgrimage sites in Latin Christendom, was prolific between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. While statistics on the number of cults which were instituted vary considerably, scholars agree that, in the words of Vauchez, "the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were a period of significant quantitative

[14] Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowan and Littlefield, 1975), Ch. 8, 114–136.

[15] Deborah J. Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome in the Middle Ages* (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1998), Ch. 8, esp. 198.

growth, and that (the cult of the saints) became, between 1150 and 1350, one of the principal expressions of popular devotion."[16]

During this "great age of pilgrimage," it seems that women continued to be a significant group of participants in the practice. Evidence of female participation is more or less constant throughout the period. Many women, including noblewomen and abbesses, were in attendance during the Crusades because of vows they themselves chose to make. They served as companions to male crusaders as well as providing logistical support and caregiving. Clerical response to their presence ranged from active encouragement to strong distaste.[17] Meanwhile, according to Sigal's analysis of thousands of miracles recorded in western European shrines, women comprised approximately one-third of those seeking miracles in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[18] However, as pilgrimage was a highly regional practice and miracle stories represent a spotty form of record-keeping, there is no way to specify how many women participated overall, nor even to be certain how many women became pilgrims to a particular location. The best that can be said is that women were a constant presence in such shrines.

By the later Middle Ages, then, the shrines of the saints had proliferated across Europe, and an increasingly literate and devout laity enthusiastically participated in pilgrimages to holy sites near and far. Indeed, churchmen were becoming dismayed at the number of people who went to the Holy Land as well as to other shrines. It became common to speak of the mobs of pilgrims as overcurious and lacking in devotion, people who were using a purportedly penitential practice

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[16] For a summary of the numerical data, see André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 105–6.

[17] See Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage, c. 700–c. 1500* (New York: Palgrave, 2002) 91, on abbesses. James M. Powell, "The Role of Women in the Fifth Crusade," in *The Horns of Hattin: Proceedings of the Second Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East*, ed. B. Z. Kedar (Jersualem: Yad Izhak Ben-Svi, 1992), 294–301, discusses women encouraged by then-bishop Jacque de Vitry to take the crusading vow; Helen Nicholson, "Women on the Third Crusade," *The Journal of Medieval History* 23, no. 4 (1997): 335–349, discusses the possibility that women actually undertook military roles during particularly desperate battles; Conor Kostic, "Women and the First Crusade: Prostitutes or Pilgrims?" in *Victims or Viragoes? Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Women* Vol. 4, Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless, eds. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 57–68, provides a sampling of the negative attitudes of male monastic chroniclers to women's presence on the crusade. See also Bernard Hamilton, "Eleanor of Castile and the Crusading Movement," in *Crusaders, Cathars, and Holy Places*, ed. Hamilton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).

[18] Pierre André Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale (XI^e–XII^e siècle)* (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1985), 301.

in order to escape the tedium of home rather than bring themselves closer to God.[19] Women continued to appear as pilgrims in this period, and although the evidence still does not provide a complete record of all participants they were more and more commonly recorded in the literature generated by pilgrimage. They appear in miracle stories, in satire and in sermons, in travel narratives and court records. The lack of comprehensive statistical data coupled with an omnipresence of episodic evidence in this period has led to a spectrum of careless assumptions on the topic. Casual glances at misogynist rhetoric have caused some historians to insist that women rarely made such journeys, but others have gone so far as to suggest that "women may have formed the majority of visitors at many shrines."[20]

Although the later medieval sources cannot provide an unimpeachable or complex statistical description of women's pilgrimages, a close examination of the sources nonetheless offers important points for consideration. It is clear that, whatever percentage they may have formed, women *did* go on pilgrimage in noticeable numbers in the later Middle Ages. Their presence is recorded in a variety of sources, and they were heartily reviled by critics. These two facts alone make it clear that female pilgrims were hardly rare. This evidence of the regularized participation of women should draw our attention, because it represents an unusual confluence of circumstances. The practice of pilgrimage provided lay people with both relatively unmediated access to the divine, and also the opportunity to help create the public perception of those encounters with the divine. Few other situations in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries allowed large numbers of women both that kind of access and that kind of voice. How did society perceive the efforts and experiences of women who sought to meet otherworldly power face-to-face? How did the women themselves understand or publicly interpret their own travels? These questions form the central focus of this study.

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[19] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, Chs. 14 and 15, 256–288; on the lack of religiosity of later medieval pilgrims, see Christian Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage: The Literature of Discovery in Fourteenth-century England* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), Chs. 1–3, 1–59.

[20] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 262. On the other hand, Josephie Brefield, *A Guidebook for the Jerusalem Pilgrimage in the Late Middle Ages: A Case for Computer-Aided Textual Criticism* (Hilvershum: Verloren, 1994), 15, claimed that the Jerusalem pilgrimage was "virtually reserved for the male sex."

Pilgrimage, a major form of medieval Christian devotion, has attracted significant scholarly attention over the course of a century.[21] But despite the nearly unique opportunity the subject of women's pilgrimages provides to explore women's religiosity and their ability to shape the broader cultural narrative, comparatively little has been written specifically about them. Sumption's summary study offers two pages of anecdotal evidence on the topic of women's pilgrimages, noting that they seemed to have been more common in the later Middle Ages, and that several shrines denied them admittance.[22] Diana Webb's more recent general study of the topic also briefly touched on the phenomenon of female pilgrims, noting in general terms the complexity of social attitudes about the matter but also arguing that "women did in fact enjoy a large measure of freedom to go on pilgrimage throughout the medieval centuries."[23]

A few article-length studies of medieval female pilgrims have appeared. Several of these focus on the early Middle Ages. Patricia Halpin has written an article on the pilgrimages of Anglo-Saxon women.[24] Julie Ann Smith summarized some of the differences between late Antique female pilgrims such as Egeria and these same Anglo-Saxon travelers.[25] And Kathleen Quirk explored the representations

[21] See, among others, Sidney Heath, *Pilgrim Life in the Middle Ages* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1911); Jean J. Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages* 4th ed., Lucy Smith, trans. (London: Ernst Benn limited, 1950); H. F. M. Prescott, *Jerusalem Journey: Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1954); R. J. Mitchell, *The Spring Voyage: The Jerusalem Pilgrimage in 1458* (London: John Murray, 1964); Walter Starkie, *The Road to Santiago: Pilgrims of St. James* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965); Sumption, *Pilgrimage* (1975); Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage*, (1976); Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978); Raymond Oursel, *Pèlerins du moyen age: les hommes, les chemins, les sanctuaires* (Paris: Fayard, 1978); Horton Davies and Marie-Hélène Davies, *Holy Days and Holidays: The Medieval Pilgrimage to Compostella* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1982); John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow, eds., *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Babara N. Sargent-Baur, ed., *Journeys Towards God: Pilgrimage and Crusade* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992); Bryan F. LeBeau and Menachem Mor, eds., *Pilgrims and Travelers to the Holy Land* (Omaha: Creighton University Press, 1996); and Maryjane Dunn and Linda Kay Davidson, eds., *The Pilgrimage to Compostella in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996).

[22] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 261–3.

[23] Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 90.

[24] Patricia A. Halpin, "Anglo-Saxon Women and Pilgrimage," in *Anglo-Norman Studies XIX: Proceedings of the Battle Conference*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1996), 97–122.

[25] Smith, "Sacred Journeying," 41–56.

of gender in thirty Norman miracles between 1050 and 1150.[26] But even though Halpin commented on the richness of later medieval materials on female pilgrims, relatively little direct attention has been focused on them.[27] An article by Kristine Utterback explored the Jerusalem pilgrimage writings of female mystics in the later Middle Ages and their desire to connect their inner, visionary life with the physical landscape of the Gospels.[28] However, her interest was primarily in the visions themselves, not in the more mundane experiences of travel. More recently, Harry Schnitker has painted a detailed portrait of the extensive fifteenth-century pilgrimages of Margaret of York, providing both the political and devotional context for the activities of a single devout noblewoman.[29]

Thus far, only one study draws on the varied and rich source materials from the later Middle Ages to discuss the experiences of female pilgrims at length. Susan Signe Morrison, a scholar of medieval literature, explored the topic in *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England: Private Piety as Public Performance.* Her sources included the art and architecture of the Marian shrine at Walsingham, as well as literary, legal, and economic documentation of English women's pilgrimages. However, the historical (as opposed to literary-critical) focus of her argument rarely moved beyond an attempt to prove the *existence* of female pilgrims. Morrison's examination of literary evidence about female pilgrims is most congruent with my own interests, but it is limited strictly to English literature. Furthermore, we have arrived at somewhat different conclusions about the cultural and social issues surrounding that literature, particularly with respect to the attitudes of professional churchmen, who, Morrison asserted, wholeheartedly endorsed women's pilgrimages.[30]

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[26] Kathleen Quirk, "Men, Women, and Miracles in Normandy, 1050–1150," in *Medieval Memories: Men, Women, and the Past, 700–1300*, ed. Elisabeth van Houts (New York: Longman, 2001), 53–71.

[27] Halpin, "Anglo-Saxon Women," 97.

[28] Kristine Utterback, "The Vision Becomes Reality: Medieval Women Pilgrims to the Holy Land," in *Pilgrims and Travelers to the Holy Land*, ed. Bryan F. LeBeau and Menachem Mor (Omaha: Creighton University Press, 1996), 159–168.

[29] Harry Schnitker, "Margaret of York on Pilgrimage: The Exercise of Devotion and the Religious Traditions of the House of York," in *Reputation and Representation in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Douglas L. Biggs, Sharon D. Michalove, and A. Compton Reeves (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 81–122.

[30] Morrison, *Women Pilgrims*, 123.

Finding Female Pilgrims

There is a much-lamented problem in studying the majority of premodern social or cultural experience, in that the vast majority of it is passed on to us in texts created by a literate, clerical, and above all, *tiny* minority. Among that minority, men outnumber women so substantially as to make the task of uncovering women's experiences seem impossible. Nonetheless, the ideal first step is to look at those rare sources wherein a woman did express herself directly. In the strictest sense, there is only one such example available in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: the commentary on pilgrimage made by Christine de Pizan in her *Livre des Trois Vertues.* Like so many of the women who have been investigated by historians, Christine was unusual: she was literate, not-married, and inarguably a member of the closed and almost exclusively male circles of the medieval intelligentsia. Further limiting her reliability as source, while Christine commented on the meanings of pilgrimage, she did not describe a pilgrimage of her own. Beyond Christine, there are no female authors in the body of sources explored here; a few texts were dictated in the first person by women, notably the *Book of Margery Kempe* and some wills, but all the others were produced by men. Furthermore, men who committed such stories to text told of women far less often than they recorded the stories of male pilgrims. While sources describing female pilgrims are not hopelessly scant, neither are they as plentiful as one might wish.

The limited nature of these sources has shaped both the scope and the conclusions of this study. To begin with, this book describes more cultural similarities across medieval Europe than regional disparities. I recognize that this potentially glosses over great variations in European attitudes about women's religious travel from region to region, but as mentions of female pilgrims are indeed limited, widening the source base seemed prudent. However, even if sources were more plentiful, attempts to ground this study in one corner of Latin Christendom or another would nonetheless have presented practical difficulties. If we limit our questions to those who *came to* a particular place, we assume that they take on or reflect the local culture of that place, regardless of how far they traveled to get there; if we limit to those who *departed from* a particular place, we discount vast differences between types of pilgrimage and types of destination, differences I have attempted to address here with some care. Meanwhile, while any pilgrim, or pilgrim

group, is culturally grounded in a home region, pilgrimage is ultimately a phenomenon of geographical, and hence cultural, displacement. Thus, in the hope of taking in the largest possible body of sources which seemed roughly comparable, it seemed sensible to study women's pilgrimages in Latin Christendom, the greater geographic and cultural region within which their displacement occurred. The use of the term by medieval people correctly denoted a cultural zone which shared everything from major pilgrimage destinations (particularly Rome, Jerusalem, Compostela, and Canterbury), to rituals, to theological interpretations of those rituals. Indeed, many of the texts explored here shared sources, an audience, or both; and many of the authors expressed their thoughts and experiences in Latin, the language which bore their common intellectual heritage.

Even broadening the search for sources about women's pilgrimage does not solve the problem of how their experiences have been obscured by the authors who noted down their stories. Luckily, for three decades, historians have been working diligently to develop techniques which allow us to unearth something of the experiences of women and of the illiterate from the writings of literate men. But in the case of pilgrimage, these individual experiences are arguably more obscure than usual. This is because pilgrimage is a group experience. Turner and Turner, writing from an anthropological perspective, explained pilgrimage as a liminal experience: it removed individuals from their larger culture, put them through an initiation or rite of passage, and then returned them to their home culture with an altered social status. They argued that for pilgrims within this liminal space, "likeness of lot and intention is converted into commonness of feeling, into 'communitas.'"[31] Indeed, they went so far as to assert that the social interactions of pilgrims were not conducted according to the rules of their quotidian lives.[32] In a very different take, Eamon Duffy situated pilgrimage within the late medieval English practice of "corporate Christianity," which was "resolutely and enthusiastically orientated towards the public and the corporate, and . . . a continuing sense of the value of cooperation and mutuality in seeking salvation."[33] He argued that within this corporate behavior, which he felt was expressed in everything from the decoration

[31] Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, 13.
[32] Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, 15.
[33] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 131.

of churches to parish guild structures, the community's social hierarchy was still maintained. He applied the concept of corporate Christianity to pilgrimage, which, he said, "helped the believer to place the religious routine of the closed and concentric worlds of household, parish, or guild in a larger and more complex perception of the sacred, which *transcended while affirming local allegiances* (emphasis mine)." But whether it is framed as egalitarian or as hierarchical, this synthetic group identity remained central to the practice of pilgrimage. The importance of these group identities was bound to obscure the experiences of distinct, individual personalities.

Arguably, the presence of such a group-identity among pilgrims shaped not only the experience of pilgrimage, but also the texts that described them. They were created in ways which pose significant questions about the distance between the lived experiences of medieval people and the concerns of the individual who recorded the "facts" about those experiences. For example, sources that speak about imagined pilgrimages, such as satire, devotional literature, and courtesy literature, deliberately play on group ideals about what a pilgrimage should (or should not) be. Even if they were written by a single person, they would make little sense if they were not intended to make sense for a very large audience that had agreed to a common set of ideals about the practice. Meanwhile, sources which describe real pilgrimages, rather than imaginary ones, were also in some senses produced by a group of authors rather than an individual, because they were by-products of a group devotional practice. Miracle stories were experienced by a group of people, celebrated publicly (perhaps by an even larger group), proclaimed publicly to church authorities by the individual or individuals involved, and often investigated by church authorities in a court setting; their written forms reflect at least some, if not all, of these group consultations. Inquisitorial records, like miracle stories, are a composite of clerical authority and the memories of multiple witnesses. Even the wills made by the dying which contained a bequest for proxy pilgrimage were dictated to a scribe or notary before witnesses (any one of whom might have been the potential proxy pilgrim). Travel narratives are arguably the most undiluted personal testimony available, but they were testimony about a group ritual, and however much the author shaped the text as it was written, the inspiration for that narrative was literally played out by a group. All of these sources, then, are in some sense collaborative, just as the practice of pilgrimage itself was a collaborative ritual.

How, then, can we learn anything about medieval women who became pilgrims? My approach to interpreting such complex and collaborative evidence is twofold. First, it strikes me as crucial to attempt to isolate something of women's own experiences in the midst of these multi-vocal narratives. This work of drawing attention to women's presence, participation, and unique circumstances has been a matter of patiently sorting through haystacks in search of needles, and here I compare the evidence thus harvested, looking for commonalities. At times, trying to puzzle out women's experiences is a matter of stitching together small scraps of narrative; at other times, as with miracle stories or court records, the somewhat more plentiful evidence allows for a cautious counting of cases, designed to uncover general trends. However, such statistical conclusions can never provide a particularly concrete knowledge of women's experiences, based as they are in accounts that were negotiated between so many parties. While this is a frustrating problem, it must be remembered that it is also a commonplace one for many scholars who study medieval people, especially people of lower socioeconomic status.

A second, but hardly separate, task is to make some sense of the integration of women's experiences into the larger fabric of medieval culture and society. The ways in which women's sacred travels were perceived and even appropriated by others—and how women were at times able to collaborate with their audiences to help engineer a more useful or favorable perception—is as weighty an issue as that of legal permission or travel arrangements, since the suppositions of those around a female pilgrim could pose just as firm a barrier as more mundane matters could. In exploring these perceptions and their creation, we are less hampered by the difficult nature of the sources than we are served by them. After all, the goal of any text which described a pilgrimage (rather than ordered one to happen in the future) was to draw the reader into the pilgrimage group, and to allow the reader to travel along and share the experience—or perhaps, rather, a version of that experience that was carefully crafted to meet particular goals. Thus, knowledge of the expectations and concerns that attended women's pilgrimages can shed light on the women who appear in the records as pilgrims.

Seeking moments of influence, agreement, and tension among the people who constituted the authors of both ritual action and written texts requires complex and cautious reading of the sort practiced by social and cultural historians such as Natalie Zemon Davis, Carolyn

Bynum, Dyan Elliot, and Nancy Caciola, and literary critics such as Stephen Greenblatt.[34] In general, the work of these scholars shows us that moments of relative textual harmony among the sources' contributing authors, or the repetition of ideas and images, can teach us much about what a culture expects from a given experience. Greenblatt, for example, reminds us about the mimetic influence of texts and other forms of art, so that expectations cause art and life to reflect one another.[35] Thus, part of the methodology in this study will be an investigation of conventional wisdom, things that 'everybody knew' about women's pilgrimages, whether or not the things that 'everybody knew' were a perfectly accurate descriptor of real women's travels.

As we have seen, however, what 'everybody knew' is by no means uniform. Points of fracture and dissonance among collaborative authors, such as the narrative confusions in the story of Margaret and Laurence, are moments which allow us to hear most clearly the distinction between authorial voices, and perhaps to gauge the differing goals and levels of influence of each. Hence, another trajectory in the methodology here will be to explore these moments of dissonance, in the hope that they can help us understand what women contributed that was unique, or at least, self-guided. While the author of Margaret's story presented, at center stage, her husband's (presumably powerful) anger and opposition, the narrative fissure created when she traveled anyway tells us that she had independent agency, even though that agency was not clearly explained. The triumphant outcomes of her disobedience—a well body, divine endorsement of her choice, and a repentant and supportive husband—reinforce this interpretation. Further, having disregarded her husband's wishes, Margaret not only got the healing she wanted, but also found a cooperative author to help her create an alternative, positive script about her role as a female pilgrim. Her actions and her story, as we have it in text, tell us not only about her agency, but about

[34] See, for some excellent and formative examples, Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food for Medieval Women* (University California Press, 1988); Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Dyan Elliot, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); and Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[35] Greenblatt, introduction to *Marvelous Possessions*, 1–25.

her potential allies, and hence about broader divisions of opinion in medieval culture.

This study is arranged according to the nature of the pilgrimages that women took in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Chapter 2 deals with portrayals of pilgrimages taken by female characters in medieval fiction and proscriptive literature. Medieval writers expressed serious reservations about the possibilities inherent in women's travels, fearing that, unsupervised, women would indulge their innate tendencies toward vice, and particularly toward lust, pride, greed, and deceit, to the detriment of their families and their souls. These concerns appeared as satirical portraits of mobile women, and their inverse can be seen in the monitions of courtesy literature. While authors of different social classes, estates, and regions tailored their discussion of this misogynist trope to fit their differing needs and assumptions, it was nonetheless ubiquitous and broadly consistent. These commonly-expressed concerns about women's travel created a difficult cultural climate for women who wished to participate in devotional journeys, but simultaneously remind us by their very existence that women did, indeed, become pilgrims.

Chapter 3 discusses women's participation in pilgrimages to the shrines of miracle-working saints. Based on a quantitative and qualitative examination of the miracle stories associated with seven later medieval saints' cults from across Latin Christendom, it argues that women frequently became pilgrims, but that their stories told of different circumstances. While men felt free to approach the saints for help with a variety of problems, authors who recorded the stories of women had to contextualize those problems within women's normative roles as caregivers. As such, women tended to seek help for others nearly as often as they did for themselves. This intercessory role had positive implications, as it was a close imitation of the role and behaviors of the saints themselves. Thus, miracle stories relied upon an image of female pilgrims quite different from the wandering troublemakers of misogynist satire. They presented instead women who acted as selfless servants of their families. Such women's prayers and devotion helped to make miracles, and they in turn were made better and holier people through their contact with God's healing grace.

Chapter 4 explores women's pilgrimages to Rome and to Jerusalem, which served a different purpose than those associated with miracle-working saints. Instead of providing miraculous healing, these pilgrimages deepened the devotion of the pilgrim by allowing her to experience the physical context of the New Testament, and they also

provided indulgences. The less tangible and more interior goals of these journeys made it difficult for women to justify such travel as a form of caregiving. Women did, however, go to these shrines, and they left traces in travel accounts, especially those written by Margery Kempe and Felix Fabri. Resistance to these women's journeys was strong, but it was nevertheless to aspects of their traditional roles that they appealed in order to shield themselves from censure during their travels. Again, as in the case of women who traveled to miracle-working shrines, it was possible for feminine caregiving duties to provide grounds for positive responses to female pilgrimage. Indeed, women who displayed steadfastness or meekness in the face of difficult circumstances might also be interpreted as saintly.

Pilgrimage is a marvelously flexible kind of ritual, with meanings that can suit many needs. Chapter 5 explores two specific situations in which women were not merely allowed to become pilgrims, but were in fact forced to do so. Some women became penitential pilgrims, taking journeys handed down as sentences by ecclesiastical courts. Other women were carried against their will to miracle-working shrines by family members in the hopes of curing their madness or demonic possession. Based on evidence from miracle collections and from fourteenth-century inquisitorial records, I will argue that despite the opposition to women's pilgrimages under less urgent circumstances, pilgrimage was nonetheless more likely to be imposed upon women than upon men as a treatment for heresy, insanity, or demonic possession. These compulsory pilgrimages used specialized symbols and rituals to help denote the women's dangerous spiritual status and their rehabilitation from that status. Further, even under these circumstances, women had significant opportunities to help shape the events of their pilgrimages and others' perceptions of them.

Chapter 6 examines the ways in which women who were unable or unwilling physically to travel engaged in forms of what I call non-corporeal pilgrimage. A variety of such practices were available to later medieval Christians. Women, like men, could appoint surrogates to go on pilgrimage for them, either before they died, or after. Objects also took journeys in the place of people: pilgrimage souvenirs were commonly brought back from shrines for use by stationary recipients, and those unable to travel sent personal possessions to shrines with traditional pilgrims. The pilgrimage to Jerusalem, meanwhile, was used as the framework for many later medieval guides to devotional prayer, texts intended to bring the mind to places where the body could

not go. This chapter will argue that not only were such extensions of the pilgrimage experience available to women, but that women were often their intended audience. This is yet another example of the ambiguity and flexibility of the relationship between women and pilgrimage. The availability of non-corporeal practices continued to advertise the efficacy and desirability of pilgrimage to women, while also underscoring concerns about their bodily travel.

Very few of the women who appear in these pages were direct, immediate reporters on their experiences of pilgrimage. In many ways, this book can sketch the outline of women who took pilgrimages, but cannot fill in their faces and their thoughts. There were, however, outlines into which women were expected to fit, and these were outlines that women themselves had a hand in shaping. The female voices that have been recorded (albeit by male scribes, in most cases) were at times remarkably assertive about their subjective perceptions, and seem to confirm that these outlines had a real impact on women's inner lives. It is my hope that I have rendered them as clearly as possible.

CHAPTER TWO

"SHE KOUDE MUCHEL OF WANDRYNGE BY THE WEYE:" PILGRIMAGE AND THE FEAR OF WANDERING WOMEN

Among the many fascinating glimpses of medieval society and religious practice left to us in *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer recorded a proverb that raised concerns about women who undertook pilgrimage. The Wife of Bath's colorful remembrances of her fifth husband, Jankin, include a description of his scolding about her tendency to wander. At the end of a long diatribe against the mobility of women, Jankin piously insisted that "whoever builds his house out of willows, and spurs his blind horse over plowed land, and suffers his wife to go seeking shrines, is worthy to be hanged on a gallows!"[1] Jankin was not alone in his condemnation of women's pilgrimages. Profane or carnival versions of pilgrim badges from the Netherlands, dating to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth centuries, provide a striking example of this negativity expressed in visual, rather than textual, form. A series of these badges anthropomorphized female genitalia; one portrayed a vulva as a huntress, and another as a queen.[2] But another badge dressed a vulva up as a pilgrim. The vulva-figure carries a staff and rosary beads, and wears the pilgrim's typical large, floppy-brimmed hat. (See Plate 1.) The badge's unmistakable equation of women's pilgrimages and unbridled sexuality provides a pointed explanation for Jankin's desire to keep his wife at home.

Castigation of female pilgrims grew in part out of an attack by late medieval clerical writers on *curiositas*, the needless examination of worldly things which do not help one to attain salvation. Various forms of physical travel, including pilgrimage, were thought to express the

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[1] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed., ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 113, lines 655–58: "'Whoso that buyldeth his hous al of salwes, / And priketh his blynde hors over the falwes, / And sufffreth his wyf to go seken halwes, / Is worthy to been hanged on the galwes!'" Modern renderings of Chaucer are the author's own.

[2] A. M. Koldeweij, "Lifting the Veil on Pilgrim Badges," in *Pilgrimage Explored*, ed. J. Stoppford (York: York Medieval Press, 1999), 185–88; images appear on 170 and 173.

Plate 1. Vulva-pilgrim holding a staff and rosary, 1375–1425. Van Beuningen Collection, Cothen, The Netherlands. Inv. no. 2184. *Heilig en Profaan* (1993), cat. no. 663.

vice.[3] The condemnation of overcurious pilgrims continued well into the Protestant Reformation.[4] But as pilgrimages by women became more common in the later Middle Ages, they aroused comment on problems specifically associated with women's travel.[5] Authors of satire lampooned female travelers, and authors of proscriptive literature warned against the social dangers inherent in their journeys. The gender-specific and ubiquitous nature of these complaints is neatly summed up by a Spanish proverb noted by Mary Elizabeth Perry; the adage castigated

[3] Christian Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage: The Literature of Discovery in Fourteenth-century England* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), 21, 51.

[4] Frédéric Tinguely, "Janus en Terre sainte: la figure du pèlerin curieux à la Renaissance," *Revue des Sciences Humaines* 245 (1997): 57.

[5] Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), 262.

both men and women who acted outside of accepted gender roles, asserting that one should tolerate "neither broken sword nor wandering woman."[6] This intolerance stemmed from the fact that wandering women violated, or threatened to violate, the spatial boundaries that defined behavior appropriate to their gender. In the words of Sarah Salih, "the opposition between the good woman in the household and the bad woman in the street continues to inform medieval texts of all genres, which write gendered morality in spatial terms."[7] As a result, medieval authors consistently asserted that women's travels outside of the enclosed and controlled space of the home and into the public sphere allowed them to indulge vices such as greed, pride, lust, and deceit, to their own detriment and that of their families. Pilgrimage was regularly listed among types of problematic public excursions.

This chapter will explore discussions of women's mobility, and especially pilgrimage, in several later medieval texts, noting their common heritage and their repetition of similar elements. I first locate the roots of the castigation of mobile women in the late Antique misogynist tradition, in both social commentary and in medicine. I then examine the ways in which these same ideas appeared in later medieval satire and allegory. But the ongoing concern about women's mobility was not entirely a satirical or humorous one. It also appeared in proscriptive literature, wherein women were warned against needless travel, and were instructed in how to avoid misbehavior when they did appear in public. Taken together, this sample of sources suggests that negative portraits of female pilgrims were commonplace, and drew on a common series of misogynist assumptions; however, the ways in which those concerns were raised varied by region, by the presumed social class of the women under discussion, and according to the goals of the authors. It is therefore not my intent here to make definitive assertions about a single "true meaning" that hides behind various iterations of this trope. Rather, I am interested only in their surface appearance. I wish primarily to point out the ubiquity of attacks on women' mobility, and the common misogynist vocabulary in which such attacks were couched.

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[6] Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 7.

[7] Sarah Salih, "At home; out of the house," in Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 125.

Susan Signe Morrison, in her book *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England: Private Piety as Public Performance*, has used some of this same body of sources to discuss female pilgrims in English culture.[8] Since her interest is in England alone, she used Middle-English translations of some of the sources. She has explored two themes similar to those I include here. First, she noted concerns about women's deceit, pointing out repeated images of women who use pilgrimage as a disguise or subterfuge.[9] Second, she emphasized the association between women's pilgrimages and sexual misbehavior.[10] However, her analysis of the texts did not trace medieval thinkers' assertions of causal connections between these traits, or differences in their emphasis.[11] Morrison, furthermore, argued for a fundamental discontinuity between negative, secular images of female pilgrims and a wholly positive image of female pilgrims promoted in hagiography and miracle stories. As such, she suggested that the church and secular society endorsed "conflicting representations" of female pilgrims which were "binary opposites."[12] This is a take on the matter with which I disagree; as we shall see, in the context of both satire and sermon, clerical authors might also decry women's mobility. It is my hope that my discussion of literary portrayals of women who wandered is not only broader in geographic scope, but also sensitive to variations in its use.

Late-Antique Models

Later medieval texts that addressed the dangers inherent in women's mobility did so in a series of common terms in part because they drew

[8] I would like to note here that the congruence of our source materials was strictly an instance of convergent evolution of thought; her book became available to me only as I was performing final revisions on the version of this chapter that appeared in my dissertation. As I feel that our reading of the sources is in some ways fundamentally dissimilar, I have carried my own work forward, attempting at the same time to be aware of my dialogue with Morrison.

[9] Susan Signe Morrison, *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England: Private Piety as Public Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 108–111.

[10] Morrison, *Women Pilgrims*, 111–116.

[11] Indeed, her analysis of the negative images of female pilgrims in secular sources was presented in the following brief statement: "The numerous examples above illustrate the generally dubious position of women pilgrims in secular literature." Morrison, *Women Pilgrims*, 117.

[12] Morrison, *Women Pilgrims*, 122.

on an entrenched and narrow tradition of literary attacks on womankind. The tradition of misogyny in the Middle Ages was venerable and far-reaching, but also rested upon a small number of foundational texts, so that "old friends (or enemies) keep turning up over and over again."[13] For our purposes, possibly the most important of these foundational texts is Jerome's quotation from the fourth-century B.C.E. Greek philosopher Theophrastus (or, perhaps, his invention of that quotation).[14] Theophrastus' screed, which complained bitterly of women's mobility, greed, pride, lust, and deceit, was paraphrased or entirely reprised in many of the later medieval texts I examine here. Indeed, it survives in an only slightly abridged form in the *Alphabet of Tales*, a fifteenth-century English translation of a Latin collection called the *Alphabetum Narrationum*, completed in 1307 and attributed to the French Dominican Arnold of Liège (d. 1345).[15] From late Antiquity onward, misogynist authors drew upon the stack of accusations lodged by Theophrastus, cementing them together into several shapes, including a tradition of complaint about female travelers and pilgrims.

While Theophrastus leveled several accusations at women, and these accusations turned out to have had remarkable staying power in discourse about women, the text in which they are enumerated has a rather fragmented structure. Theophrastus (or Jerome) did not relate his list of charges against women to one another in any clear causal sense. The text begins with a complaint about women's desire for clothing:[16]

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[13] Alcuin Blamires, introduction to *Woman Defamed, Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*, ed. Blamires (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 7.

[14] For a brief summary of the debate over Jerome's sources, see Elizabeth A. Clark, "Dissuading From Marriage: Jerome and the Asceticization of Satire," in *Satiric Advice on Women and Marriage: From Plautus to Chaucer*, ed. Warren S. Smith (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 158–9.

[15] J.-Th. Welter, *L'exemplum dans la literature religieuse et didactique du moyen age* (Paris, Occitania, 1927), 304. The original Latin version of the compendium has never been published (see Joan Young Gregg, "The Exempla of 'Jacob's Well': A Study in the Transmission of Medieval Sermon Stories," *Traditio* 33 (1977): 361, note 7). For comparative purposes, see the translation of Jerome's original quote of Theophrastus in Blamires, ed., *Woman Defamed, Woman Defended*, 70–72.

[16] Arnold of Liège, *An Alphabet of Tales. An English 15th Century Translation of the Alphabetum Narrationum Once Attributed to Étienne de Besançon* ed. Mary McCleod Banks (London; Early English texts Society, 1905), 529: "Ieronimus tellis in 'Libro de Nupcijs' of ane Aureolus Theophrasti, & in þis buke he axkis if a wise man sulde wed a wyfe, and he says þuf sho war nevur so fayre, nor so wele taght, nor had nevur so honest fadur nor moder, yit nevur-þe-les, he says, a wyse man sulde not wed hur, for þis Aurelious sais it is not possible to a man to please bothe his wife & his childer; ffor wommen, he says, burd hafe gold & syluer & gay clothyng, & a servand and mayny oþer thyngis, & yit

> Jerome tells in the "Book of Marriage" of an Aurelius Theophrasti, and in this book he asks if a wise man should wed a wife, and he says though she were never so fair, nor so well taught, nor had never so honest father nor mother, yet nevertheless . . . a wise man should not wed her, for . . . it is not possible for a man to please both his wife and his children; for women, he says, must have gold and silver and gay clothing, and a servant and many other things, and yet all the night she will lay chattering that there are others that have better kerchiefs and are fresher arrayed than she is, and unless she be well arrayed she likes . . . to come among no people and she will say "Lo! I am the lowest in all this town!"

Note that at the end, the passage shifts away from concerns about women's pride and greed by locating that pride and greed in the context of public appearances. Turning on this, Theophrastus then launched into a complaint about women's desire to wander and socialize, and their envy of their husbands' mobility and social contacts:[17]

> Also she will say to her husband "Why did you look at your neighbor's wife, and why did you speak with your neighbor's maiden?" And when he comes from the market she will say "What have you bought? I may not have a friend nor a fellow because of you, nor love of another man, but if I be suspect."

Given these negative generalizations about women's vicious desires, it should come as no surprise that Theophrastus had a dour outlook on marriage. He suggested that those who were to enter into wedlock should not bother to take any action intended to make the outcome happier, since it was not possible for them to be happy in marriage anyway. Having come to this hopeless conclusion, he advised only that "no man should choose his wife long before, but take whichever one happens to come to him, whether she be fair or foul, or proud or angry, and therefore they should not be tried out before they are married."[18]

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all þe nyght sho will lyg chatterand & say þat þer is oder þat hase better curchus & er fressher arayed þan sho is, and if sho be wele arayed hur lykis . . . . to com emang no pepull and sho will say, 'Lo! I am the baddeste in all þis town!' " Modern renderings are the author's own.

[17] Arnold of Liège, *Alphabet*, ed. Banks, 529: "Also sho will say vnto hur husbond; 'Whi beheld þou þi neghbur wyfe, & whi spak þou with þi neghbur mayden?' And when he commys fro þe markett sho will say: 'What hase þou boght? I may not hafe a frend nor a fellow for þe, not luf of a noder man bod if I be suspecte."

[18] Arnold of Liège, *Alphabet*, ed. Banks, 529: "And þerfor þer sulde no man make chesyng of his wife long befor, bod take such one as hym happend, whedur sho be fayre or fowle, or prowde or angry, & þerfor þai sulde not be provid or þai war wed. A hors or ane ass, ane ox or a cow or a servand, all þies sulde be provid or þai wer

Then he returned to his list of complaints, adding more disorganized accusations of misbehavior.[19]

> And if you give her all your goods to keep, yet she will believe that you keep some for yourself, and thus she will suspect you and hate you, and happily afterward poison you. And if you bring men of craft into your house, like tailors or others, it is peril for her.… So if you forbid her it will cause her to trespass. Therefore what profits a diligent keeping of a wife when an unchaste wife may not be kept.… And if she be fair other men will love her, and if she be foul she will be proud, just in case men will make much of her, and it is very hard to keep well that which many men love, and it is very sad to have that which no man will cherish.… Nevertheless a foul wife may better be kept than a fair wife may…

Note again that mobility—either of wives going out or of craftsmen coming in—is the agent by which the author imagines that women's greed, pride, lust, and deceit will be expressed. However, none of these problematic innate traits is causally linked to any of the others, nor does the author explain why women are prone to such vices; they are presented simply as truths about womankind.

If authors such as Theophrastus and Jerome understood women to be such unstable and vicious creatures, "inconstant by nature and quickly yielding to stray desire,"[20] then it was left to medical texts to explain the source of women's supposedly natural waywardness. Classical medical texts, which continued to circulate throughout the Middle Ages, explained the mechanics of women's fleshly failings in several ways, all of which located women's desire for mobility and their other vices within the workings of female physiology. These medical explanations

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boght or hyrid, bod a womman sulde not a man se or he wed hur, þat he war not displesid after þai war wed."

[19] Arnold of Liège, *Alphabet*, ed. Banks, 529–530: "And if þou giff hur all þi gude to kepe, yit sho wyll trow at þou kepis som þi selfe, and þus sho will suspecte þe hafe þe in hatered, happelie afterward poyson the. And if þou bring men of craft in-to þi hows, as taillíours or oþer, it is perell for hur vnclennes. So if þou forbyd hur it will cauce hur do truspas. Therefor what profettis a diligente kepyng of a wyfe when ane vnchaste wyfe may not be kepyd, ffor þe keper of chastite is nede, and þat sho þat is not lustie to syn, sho may be callid chastie. And if sho be fayr, oþer men will luf hur, and if sho be fowle sho will be prowde, at cauce men make mekull on hur, and it is full hard to kepe þat wele þat many men luffis, and it is full hevy to hafe þat no man wyll cheris nor hafe in welde. Nevur-þe-les a fowle wyfe may bettir be kepyd þan a fayr wyfe may…"

[20] Judith M. Bennett, introduction to *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages*, ed. Bennett, Elizabeth A. Clark, Jean F. O'Barr, B. Anne Vilen, and Sarah Westphal-Wihl, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 9.

reiterated the issue of unwanted or inappropriate motion by literally embodying it. Plato explained the womb as a restless animal living within the female body, which wandered around inside the woman if not impregnated often enough, causing "hysterical" behavior.[21] Hippocratic gynecology also posited a mobile uterus, one which was even capable of striking or suffocating other organs, causing diseases best cured, in some cases, by marriage and sexuality.[22] Morrison briefly noted this connection between women's physiology and their wandering, commenting that the womb functioned as a synecdoche for woman, which "threatens by its ability to stray."[23] Restless organs, however, were not the only explanation of Theophrastus' complaints posited in classical medical literature. Galen offered instead the theory that women had more cool and moist humors than men, and Albertus Magnus later followed him in his estimation that this made women inconstant and curious.[24] Women's cool humors were also thought to leave them in a "condition of perpetual desire" because they were "driven by their craving for the hottest, most complete being, that is, the male."[25]

Later medieval writers were familiar with these well-circulated texts, both medical and moral. (Recall that Theophrastus survived nearly verbatim in a late medieval collection of stories used to illustrate sermons.) Embroidering on this classical tradition, they developed an interconnected network of associations about women who wandered, and applied that trope in a variety of situations. However it might be shaped to fit a given text, by the later Middle Ages the trope of the

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[21] For detailed discussion of Plato on women, see L. D. Derksen, *Dialogues on Women: Images of Women in the History of Philosophy* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1996) Ch. 2, 13–30.

[22] On Hippocratic gynecology, see Monica Green, introduction to *The Trotula: A Medieval Compendium of Women's Medicine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), ed. and trans. Green, esp. 17–23.

[23] Morrison, *Women Pilgrims*, 130.

[24] On Galen's humoral theory of femininity, see Clarissa W. Atkinson, *The Oldest Vocation: Christian Motherhood in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 28–36; Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 185; and Thomas Laqueur, "Orgasm, Generation, and the Politics of Reproductive Biology," in *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Catherine Gallagher and Laqueur (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 1–41.

[25] Elizabeth Robertson, "Medieval Medical Views of Women and Female Spirituality in the *Ancrene Wisse* and Julian of Norwich's *Showings*," in *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, ed. Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 147.

female wanderer always hinged, as Theophrastus' concerns had, on women's physical mobility. Medieval authors further expressed certainty that women's innately immoral impulses would express themselves through opportunities created by mobility.[26] As a woman wandered, medieval authors pointed out, she was available to the public eye. Hence, they assumed that her natural inclinations towards pride would entice her to use that public scrutiny as an opportunity to show off fine clothing. Not only might such a woman enjoy being seen by others, but she would also have the opportunity to look around. Her naturally fickle and wandering attention would therefore fall on the possessions of others, stimulating the natural tendency towards greed that kept Theophrastus up at night listening to his wife's diatribe about kerchiefs. Furthermore, critics associated feminine roaming with lust, as travel provided opportunities to meet, and to carry out assignations with, inappropriate sexual partners. Finally, they feared that such a woman might engage in deceit—perhaps colluding with other women—in order to carry out her nefarious plans. Her clever lies could enable and subsequently hide her misbehavior, leaving her husband or family prey to her potentially damaging activities.

This tradition of castigating the mobility of women easily and naturally carried over into discussions about female pilgrims; pilgrimage itself was, after all, a form of penitential wandering. Some later medieval authors made little distinction between sacred and secular public events, asserting that all such gatherings provided opportunities for women to indulge their worst impulses. Others highlighted pilgrimage as a particular area of concern. However, the application of this trope to several forms of travel was not the only way in which it was broadly applied. It was stretched to fit female characters at several points in their lifespans, from young unmarried women to elderly widows. It was rephrased so as to be relevant to both noblewomen and bourgeois women, despite the different constraints within which they lived. And it appeared in different guises in the disparate cultural contexts of northern and southern Europe. In short, the ubiquity, durability, and flexibility of

[26] For a brief discussion of the fear of women as wanderers, see Carla Casagrande, "The Protected Woman," in *A History of Women in the West II. Silences of the Middle Ages*, ed. Kristiane Klapische-Zuber (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 84–86.

this tradition make it an important touchstone for our understanding of women who did indeed undertake religious travel.

Women's Mobility in Satire and Allegory

The most striking later medieval examples of the trope of the wandering woman were satirical caricatures and allegorical representations, female figures who were lampooned for the sexual and materialistic ill-conduct which was presented as the prime motivator for their travels. It is not my intention to catalog here all of the later medieval appearances of fictional women who wandered, but rather to explore and compare several examples of prominent texts from a secular, vernacular literary tradition that was closely interconnected. The allegorical *Roman de le rose* (completed c. 1275) provides several relevant examples, particularly in Jean de Meun's characterization of La Vielle, an elderly woman who tutors a younger one in the ways of courtly love. This influential text inspired both imitators and critics. The Wife of Bath from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (c. 1400) is widely interpreted as a relying heavily on La Vielle, because Chaucer translated parts of the *Roman de la rose* and clearly borrowed from it.[27] *Les Quinze Joyes de Mariage*, a satirical tract written in the early fifteenth century by an anonymous French monk, also depicts in detail the suffering of husbands at the hands of wives who wander about. Scottish poet William Dunbar's late-fifteenth-century work, *The Tretis of the Twa Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*, features another dialogue between married women and an elderly tutor. Dunbar's poetry

[27] For a comparison of the two texts, see Ralph Hanna and Traugott Lawler, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel, eds., *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), 353 and 367–379. For discussions of the influence of *The Roman de la Rose* on "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," see Patterson, "'For the Wyves Love of Bathe'," and also "Feminine Rhetoric and the Politics of Subjectivity: La Vielle and the Wife of Bath," in *Rethinking the Romance of the Rose: Text, Image, Reception*, ed. Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 316–358; Ann S. Haskell, "The St. Joce Oath in the Wife of Bath's Prologue," *Chaucer Review* 1, no. 2 (1966): 85–87; John Finlayson, "The *Roman de la Rose* and Chaucer's Narrators," *Chaucer Review* 24, no. 3 (1990): 187–210; and Michael A. Calabrese, "May Devoid of All Delight: January, the *Merchant's Tale* and the *Romance of the Rose*," *Studies in Philology* 87, no. 3 (1990): 261–281. On Chaucer's use of the *Rose* as a source for the Wife of Bath, see Charles Muscatine, *Medieval Literature, Style, and Culture: Essays by Charles Muscatine* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 172.

has frequently been interpreted as indebted to Chaucer, and at least once Dunbar himself noted that debt.[28] His Wedo clearly draws on the Wife of Bath.[29]

All of these texts from northern Europe share not only their concerns about female pilgrims, but also their ways of contextualizing those concerns; southern European authors approached the matter differently, more frequently portraying women who were unhappily sequestered in their homes rather than women who abused the opportunity to leave those homes. Nonetheless, they did cast serious doubt on women's mobility, and we also know that their work provided inspiration to their northern counterparts. The allegorical Whore of Babylon in Dante's early-fourteenth-century *Purgatorio* plays on concerns about mobility. Dante's work influenced Chaucer; the Wife of Bath quoted *Purgatorio*.[30] Further, several of the wives in Boccacio's *Decamerone* (c. 1359) provide examples of complaints about women's mobility, and there has been extensive discussion about *Decamerone*'s potential influence on Chaucer's work.[31] Thus, the similarities in all of these texts' treatment of feminine mobility are part of a larger ongoing dialogue, one that, as we shall see, also had import for authors in genres such as proscriptive literature, miracle stories, and travelogues.

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[28] For a small example of this debt, see Priscilla Bawcutt, "Dubar's *Tretis of the Tua Marrit Wemen and the Wedo* 185–187 and Chaucer's *Parson's Tale*," *Notes and Queries* 11 (1964): 332–33. For fuller discussions, see Gregory Katzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations1430–1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Louise Fradenberg, "The Scottish Chaucer," in Roderick J. Lyall and Felicity Riddy, eds., *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Scottish Language and Literature (Medieval and Renaissance)* (Glasgow: William Culross, 1981), 177–190; Priscilla Bawcutt, introduction to *William Dunbar: Selected Poems*, Bawcutt, ed., (New York: Longman, 1996), 5, 231.

[29] James Kinley, "The Tretis of the Tua Maritt Wemen and the Wedo," *Medium Aevum* 23 (1954): 31–35; Bawcutt, introduction to *William Dunbar, Selected Poems*, 33, and Priscilla Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 324–46.

[30] On connections between the works of Jean de Meun and Dante, see Luciano Rossi, "Dante, la *Rose*, e il *Fiore*," in *Studi sul canone letterario del Trecento per Michelangelo Picone*, ed. Johannes Bartuschat and Luciano Rossi (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 2003), 9–32. On Dante's influence on Chaucer, see for example Alastair Minnis, "'Dante in Inglissh': What *Il Convivio* Really Did for Chaucer," *Essays in Criticism* 55, no. 2 (2005), 97–8.

[31] Donald McGrady, "Chaucer and the Decameron Reconsidered," *Chaucer Review* 12, no. 1 (1978): 1–26; Peter Biedler, "Just Say Yes, Chaucer Knew the Decameron: Or, Bringing the *Shipman's Tale* Out of Limbo," in *The Decameron and the Canterbury Tales: New Essays on an Old Question*, ed. Leonard Michael Koff and Brenda Deen Schlidgen (London: Associated University Press, 2000), 25–64; and on the direct connection, John Finlayson, "The Wife of Bath's 'Prologue,' LL.328–336, and Boccaccio's *Decameron*," *Neophilologus* 83 (1999): 313–316.

The Roman de la rose

Begun in c. 1230 by Guillaume de Lorris and substantially extended in c. 1275 by Jean de Meun, the *Roman de la rose* is an allegorical treatment of courtly love. The poem is framed as a dream, whose dreamer and central character, Amant (the Lover), is a masculine courtly lover seeking a sexual relationship with the object of his affections, the Rose. In the bawdier and more satirical portion of the work written by Jean de Meun, Amant learns about courtly love from one allegorical figure after another, and eventually stages an assault on the castle where his beloved Rose is enclosed; along the way, the author found several opportunities to mock the motivations and behaviors of roaming women, and of pilgrims, as well.[32] In that courtly love is a noble pursuit, Jean de Meun sized the trope of the wandering woman to fit the figures of noblewomen. He emphasized that women desire to wander because the vices allowed by such wandering, rather than being an end in themselves, could be used as a means of enhancing their social status.

Jean de Meun reiterated Theophrastus' assumption that women wish to move about outside the home for their own reasons. He provided an imagined feminine point of view on the matter in the tutelage offered by La Vielle (the Old Woman). She suggested that "a woman should be careful not to stay shut up too much," and recommended that women should attend a variety of public and religious events, going to church, to weddings, and on trips.[33] But Jean de Meun also offered clear voice to the same distaste for women's mobility that appeared in Theophrastus. For example, the allegorical figure of Amis (Friend), while advising Amant on how to proceed with his affair and attempting to discourage him from marrying his sweetheart, had occasion to imitate an angry husband scolding his wandering wife: "As soon as I go to my work, you go off dancing and live a life so riotous that it seems ribald."[34] In passages that purported to be didactic, then, the author

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[32] On Jean de Meun as a supporter of patriarchy and misogyny, see Noah D. Guynn, "Authorship and Sexual/Allegorical Violence in Jean de Meun's *Roman de la rose*," *Speculum* 79, no. 3 (2004), 628–59.

[33] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose, by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun*, ed. and trans. Charles Dahlberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 233, line 13517 forward; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 2, ed. Félix Lecoy (Paris: Librarie Honoré Champion, 1966), 160–161, lines 13487: "Et gart que trop ne sait enclose…"

[34] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, ed. Dahlberg,

warned of the tension between women and men surrounding the issue of women's mobility.

Jean de Meun explained this desire for mobility as, in part, a side effect of the excessive lust medieval thinkers commonly ascribed to womankind. Amis, a male personification, warned Amant that "a woman who wants to be beautiful, or who exerts herself to appear beautiful, examines herself and takes great trouble to deck herself out and look attractive because she wants to wage war on Chastity, who certainly has many enemies."[35] La Vielle confirmed this in her advice to a younger woman, advocating a startlingly indiscriminate approach to the matter of romantic partners. She argued that "a woman ought to spread her nets everywhere to catch all men; since she cannot know which of them she may have the grace to catch, at least she ought to hook onto all of them in order to be sure of having one for herself."[36] To the thinking of La Vielle, the chastity and immobility desired of women were both an infringement on a woman's natural state of freedom. She asserted that "women are born free," and that marriage was not intended by nature. Therefore, "when they are engaged, captured by law, and married, they still exert themselves in every way, these ladies and girls, ugly or beautiful, to return to their freedoms."[37] While there has been some debate as to whether or not her defense of free love reflects the opinion of the author or is intended as irony, there is no doubt that La Vielle held sexual freedom in high esteem.[38] The

156, line 8468–9; also *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 2, 7, lines 8439–8442: "Quant suis en mon labor alez / tantost espinguez et balez / et demenez tel resbaudie / que ce semble grant ribaudie…"

[35] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, 163–4, lines 9013–9020; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 2, 24, lines 8983–8989: "Dom je jur Dieu, le roi celestre, / que fame qui bele veust estre / ou qui dou resembler se paine, / et se remire et se demaine / por soi parer et cointoier, / qu'el veust Chastaé guerroier, / qui mout a certes d'aenemies."

[36] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose,* 234, lines 13582–13600. *Le Roman de la Rose*, vol. 2, 163, lines 13559–13564: "Ausinc doit fame par tout tendre / ses raiz por touz les homes prendre / car por ce qu'el ne peut savoir / des quex el puist la grace avoir, / au mains por un a soi sachier / a touz doit son croc estachier."

[37] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, ed. and trans. Dahlberg, 238, lines 13875 ff. *Le Roman de la Rose* Vol. 2, ed. Lecoy, 171–172, lines 13845–13868: "D'autre part el sunt franches nees; /….si que, quant el sunt affiees, / par loi prises et mariees, / por oster dissolucions / et contenz et occisions / et por aidier les norretures / dom il ont ensemble les cures…"

[38] See the summary of this debate in Chauncey Wood, "La Vielle, Free Love, and Boethius in the *Roman de la Rose*," *Revue de Littérature Comparée* 51, no. 3 (1977): 336–337.

language in which she extolled it, however—the use of opposing terms like "freedom" and "captured"—grounds her argument in freedom of mobility as well as in sexual liberty.

Pilgrimage was one of the forms of mobility that Jean de Meun linked with this errant sexuality. The denouement of the *Roman de la rose*, in particular, gives pilgrimage pride of place. Upon finally reaching the Rose, the lover-narrator used the language of pilgrimage to describe sexual union with the object of his desire: "I set out like a good pilgrim, impatient, fervent, and wholehearted, like a pure lover, on the voyage toward the aperture…"[39] What follows is a long allegorical passage which used the symbols of pilgrimage to denote intercourse. The pilgrim's traditional traveling gear, the scrip (bag) and staff, stand in the place of male genitals; the lover has a "sack and the staff so strong that it didn't need to be shod with iron for traveling and wandering."[40] Female genitalia, on the other hand, is represented as the pilgrimage shrine; Amant approached relics which stood between "two fair pillars" and down a "narrow passage" which he probed with his pilgrim's staff.[41] Some of the *Rose* manuscripts include remarkably graphic illustrations of this pilgrimage/sex act scene.[42] This scene does not really reiterate concerns about feminine mobility, in that the illicit sex act is carried out by a masculine 'pilgrim' and a feminine 'shrine;' but a morally dubious female pilgrim also appears earlier in the poem. As Amant was seeking to gain the Rose, a pair of allegorical figures helped him,

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[39] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, 348, lines 21316–20; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 3, 141, lines 21316–19: "Je, qui l'an rant merciz .c. mile, / tantost, conme bons pelerins, / hastis, fervenz et enterins / de queur conme fins amoureus,…"

[40] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, 348, line 21355; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 3, 142, lines 21351–21356: "Ele meïsmes le bourdon / m'avoit apparaillié por don, / et vost au doler la main metre / ainz que je fuisse mis a letre; / mes du ferrer ne li chalut / n'onques por ce mains n'an valut."

[41] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, 351–2, lines 21583 ff; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 3, 148, line 21559: "qu'entre les II biaus pilerez," and 150, lines 21607–8: "Par la santele que j'ai dite / qui tant iert estroite et petite…"

[42] A general description of illustration cycles in the *Rose* manuscript tradition is provided in Alcuin Blamires and Gail C. Holian, *The Romance of the Rose Illuminated* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002), xix–xxiv. The authors note on p. xxiii that "Some manuscripts depict the culmination, whether in terms of the Lover's orgasmic "pilgrimage" metaphor (a pilgrim figure is represented probing the "shrine" of female sexuality), or in terms of a final act of despoliation as he plucks a rose." An excellent reproduction of one such illumination can be found in the final plate (#42) of John V. Fleming's *The Roman de la Rose: A Study in Allegory and Iconography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

carrying out the assault on one of the gates of the castle: Atenance Contrainte (Constrained Abstinence), a woman, and Faussemblant (False Seeming), a man. The two achieved their objectives by falsely dressing up as pilgrims in order to pass by the guardian of the gate.[43] Pilgrims of both genders, then, are openly associated with sexual misdeeds and with deceit in Jean de Meun's text.

Lust was not usually the sole or even the principle motivating factor for feminine misbehavior in Jean de Meun's work, however. Whenever he addressed women's desire for mobility from the feminine perspective, Jean de Meun returned to the idea that the 'war on chastity' yielded not only pleasure, but perhaps more importantly, treasure. This is made clear in La Vielle's speech to Bel Acuel (Fair Welcome), wherein the elderly woman teaches the young one how to "extort the maximum material benefit from men, whilst conceding the least degree of personal freedom."[44] La Vielle's logic in encouraging younger women to gad about was stated in a forthright fashion, and while she suggested the possibility of lovers, she did not dwell specifically upon sexual satisfaction. She warned that women should get out in public regularly, "for while she remains in the house, she is less seen by everybody, her beauty is less well-known, less desired, and in demand less."[45] Her stated goal was not a sexual escapade, but rather the exhibition of social power; seeking to be desired, rather than to satisfy her own desire, suggests the sin of pride rather than that of lust.

Public excursions, further, were not just a matter of feeding a woman's pride by allowing her to be seen; they were a matter of being seen *while looking good*, a goal which intertwined pride with greed. La Vielle asserted this connection, explaining in very direct terms that women needed fine clothing if they wish to attract positive attention.[46] She even gave a lengthy and specific description of how a woman ought to dress and to move her body in public order to show off her fine clothing

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[43] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, 209 ff, lines 12033 ff; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 2, 115 ff, lines 12003 ff.

[44] Sarah Kay, "Women's Body of Knowledge: Epistemology and Misogyny in the *Romance of the Rose*," in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin (New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), 217.

[45] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, ed. Dahlberg, 233, line 13517 forward; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 2, 160, lines 13488–13492: "…quar, quant plus a l'ostel repose / mains est de toutes genz veüe / et sa biauté mains conneüe, / mains couvoitiee et mains requise."

[46] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, ed. Dahlberg, 233, line 13529 forward; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 2, 162, line 13525 ff.

to the best advantage.[47] Indeed, Jean de Meun emphasized this desire for finery and public attention to such an extent that he framed illicit sexual relationships less as goals than as tools which women used to acquire the needed clothing. In the context of advice from one man to another, Amis warned Amant about the rapaciousness of women where finery was concerned: "Truly, however, women are nearly all eager to take and greedy to ravish and devour until nothing can remain to those who most proclaim themselves theirs and who love them most loyally."[48] Meanwhile, in her advisory speech to Bel Acuel, La Vielle gave lengthy advice about how "to get the lover to give them coats, jackets, gloves, or mittens," teaching them "the proper ways to pluck men."[49] La Vielle's advice to women on how best to expand and use their wardrobes reflects the social mores of the medieval nobility; as Sarah-Grace Heller has noted, the *Roman de la rose* frequently satirized noble concerns that their clothing should sufficiently display their rank.[50] La Vielle's description of women's use of clothing to gain social influence has also been noted as a disruption of the assumed passivity and powerlessness of ladies as love objects in courtly literature.[51] However it might be interpreted, in Jean de Meun's text a woman's interest in illicit sex was presented as an impulse which worked primarily to serve her pride and greed.

Another female personification, Reson (Reason), exhibited the same assumptions when she offered Amant instruction on how to avoid abusing the tradition of exchanging gifts with lovers. Reson pointed out to Amant that the giving and receiving of gifts such as clothing

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[47] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, 233, lines 13529–13574; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 2, 161–162, lines 13499–13544.

[48] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, 183, line 8281; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 2, 2, lines 8251–8256: "Si sunt eles voir pres que toutes / covoiteuses de prendre, et gloutes / de ravir et de devorer / si qu'il ne puist riens demorer / a cues qui plus por leur se claiment / et qui plus leaument les aiment;…"

[49] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, 235, line 13709; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 2, 166, line 13679 forward: "Mes au plumer convient maniere / Se vallez et sa chamberiere / et sa sereur et sa norrice / et sa mere, se mout n'est nice, / pour qu'il consentent la besoigne / facent tuit tant que cil leur doigne / seurcot ou cote ou ganz ou moufles…"

[50] Sarah-Grace Heller, "Anxiety, hierarchy, and appearance in thirteenth-century sumptuary laws and the *Roman de la Rose*," *French Historical Studies* vol. 27, no. 2 (2004), 311–348.

[51] E. Jane Burns, "Courtly Love: Who Needs It? Recent Feminist Work in the Medieval French Tradition," *Signs* 27, no. 1 (2001), 32, 45–47.

and ornaments was an integral part of courtly love, but she placed limits on these gifts:

> A woman who seeks to despoil a man should be valued at nothing. I do not say that she may not, for pleasure and solace, wear an ornament given or sent by her friend, but she must not ask for it, since she would then be taking it basely; in return she must give him something of hers if *she wants to act blamelessly*. (emphasis mine)[52]

Here, a hypothetical woman engaging in an illicit sexual affair—behavior which, in this setting, was both implicitly expected and cautiously approved of—must strive more than anything to avoid the potential accusation of pride or greed; however, her wearing of a sartorial gift for reasons of sentiment rather than status was condoned. That Reson evinced more concern about the potential appearance of greed than about unchastity underscores the primary importance La Vielle placed on material gain.

Finally, for the wandering women who appear in the *Rose*, the getting and keeping of lovers was a goal which required them to master the art of deceit. The methods and goals of the deceit taught by La Vielle also privileged the service of greed and pride over that of lust. She taught that women should lie about their emotional state in order to take the fullest advantage of their lovers' wealth. More specifically, she said that a woman should "pretend to be a coward, to tremble, be fearful, distraught, and anxious when she must receive her lover,"[53] and that she should "sigh and pretend to be angry, to attack him and run at him" when displaying jealousy over his tardiness at appointments, so that "he will believe, quite incorrectly, that she loves him very loyally" and will be more likely to remain in the relationship, continuing to give gifts.[54] La Vielle also advised women in search of lovers to rely on the

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[52] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, 98–99, lines 4557–4589; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 1, 140, lines 4547–4556: "L'en ne doit riens prisier moillier / qui home bee a despoillier. / Je ne di pas que bien ne port / et par soulaz et par deport / un joëlet, se ses amis / le li a doné ou tramis, / mes qu'ele pas ne le demant, / qu'el le prendroit lors leidement; / et des siens ausinc li redoigne, / s'el le peut fere sanz vergoigne."

[53] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, 237, line 13795; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 2, 169, lines 13765–13769: "Si doit fame, s'el n'est musarde, / fere samblant d'estre couarde, / de trembler, d'estre pooreuse, / d'estre destraite et angoisseuse / quant son ami doit recevoir…"

[54] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, 237, lines 13825 ff; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 2, 170, lines 13793–13808: "Puis doit la dame sopirer / et sai par samblant aïrer, / et l'assaille et li queure seure / et die que si grant demeure /

help of their networks of female friends as they manipulated and fooled the men around them: "get your servants, the chambermaid, the nurse, your sister, even your mother, if she is not too particular, to help in the task…"[55] Further, we should recall that Atenance Contrainte also embodied women's pilgrimages also as a locus of deceit. In her case, the pilgrim's costume itself became a ruse, a repeating theme that Morrison noted in a variety of works of medieval English literature.[56]

So tightly entwined were the associations of all these feminine vices—mobility, lust, greed, pride, and deceit—that masculine fears about any one of them could trigger the entire web of assumptions. Amis, for example, conjured up all of the interconnected vices sketched out by La Vielle based upon the presence of just two of the related symptoms:

> But now tell me without making up any lies. Where, for the sake of love, did you get that other rich new dress in which you fixed yourself up here the other day when you went to the carols, for I know very well that I am to think that I never gave it to you. You swore to me by Saint Denis, Saint Philbert, and Saint Peter that it came to you through your mother, who sent you the cloth for it because, as you gave me to understand, her love for me is so great that she wants to spend her money in order to make me keep mine. May she be spitted alive, that dirty old whore.… I know that you have talked together, and it is obvious that you both have hearts touched by the same wand.[57]

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n'a il mie fet sanz reson / et qu'il tenoit en sa meson / autre fame, quell qu'ele soit, / dom li solaz mieuz li plesoit, / et qu'or est ele bien traïe / quant il l'a por autre enhaïe; / bien doit estre lasse clamee / quant ele aime sanz estre amee. / Et quant orra ceste parole / cil qui la pensee avra fole, / si cuidera tout erraument / que cele l'aint trop leaument…"

[55] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, 235, lines 13709–10; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 2, 166, lines 13680–13682: "Ses vallez et sa chamberiere / et sa sereur et sa norrice / et sa mere, se mout n'est nice…"

[56] Morrison, *Women Pilgrims*, 108–111.

[57] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose,* 168, lines 9313–9340; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 2, 33–34, lines 9283–9310: "Mes or me dites sanz contrueve, / cele autre riche robe nueve / don l'autre jor si vos parastes / quant aus queroles en alastes, / quar bien connois, et reson ai, / c'onques cele ne vos donai, / par amors, ou l'avez vos prise? / Vos m'avez juré saint Denise / et saint Philebert et saint Pere / qu'el vos vint de par vostre mere / qui le drap vos en envoia, / car si grant amor en moi a, / si con vos me fetes entendre, / qu'el veust bien ses deniers despendre / por moi fere les miens garder. / Vive la face l'en larder, / l'orde vielle putain prestresse.… Bien sai parlé avez ensemble; / andois avez, et bien le semble, / les queurs d'une verge tochiez."

The hypothetical husband feared that his wife, who had gone off unsupervised to a carol, had found a lover who gave her a rich dress, and planned, with her mother, to cover it all up while still being able to wear the gown and thus indulge her pride. This example incorporates all of the hallmarks of the complaint against wandering women; although it does not link them to pilgrimage, as we have seen, Jean de Meun was more than willing to lampoon pilgrims both male and female.

The Wife of Bath

Possibly the single most-discussed pilgrim in all of medieval literature is Alison, the Wife of Bath, from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Although she is also one of the most striking examples of the complaint about wandering women, parsing her meanings is daunting. Alison's rhetorical complexity and vibrant characterization confuse modern readers with inconsistency just as often as they amuse us with earthy wit. As such, she has been the object of an almost ludicrous amount of critical attention. Scholars have argued with equal vehemence that she should treated as caricature, as allegory, and as reality.[58] Similarly heated debates have pitted the Wife as an expression of masculine misogyny against the Wife as an expression of Chaucer's essential (if clumsy) feminism.[59] Some scholars have even argued that her gender-inappropriate

[58] On the Wife as caricature, see Reid, "Crocodilian Humor," or Susan Crane, "Alison's Incapacity and Poetic Instability in the Wife of Bath's Tale," *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association* 102, no. 1 (1987): 303–319. On the Wife as allegory, see John Alford, "The Wife of Bath Versus the Clerk of Oxford: What their Rivalry Means," *Chaucer Review* 21, no. 2 (1986): 108–132. On the wife as realistic, see David Parker, "Can We Trust the Wife of Bath?" *Chaucer Review* 4, no. 2 (1970): 90–98; Alain Renoir, "An Impossible Dream: An Underside of the Wife of Bath," *Moderna Språk* 70, no. 4 (1976): 311–322; T. L. Burton, "The Wife of Bath's Fourth and Fifth Husbands and her Ideal Sixth: The Growth of A Marital Philosophy," *Chaucer Review* 13, no. 1 (1979): 35–50; David Ayers, *Chaucer, Langland, and the Creative Imagination* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980) 83–89 and 146–152; and Barbara Gottfried, "Conflict and Relationship, Sovereignty and Survival: Parables of Power in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*," *Chaucer Review* 19, no. 3 (1985): 202–224.

[59] See on the Wife as feminist heroine Marjorie Malvern, "'Who Paynted the Leon, Tel Me Who?' Rhetorical and Didactic Roles Played be an Aesopic Fable in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*," *Studies in Philology* 80 (1983) 238–52; Kenneth J. Oberembt, "Chaucer's Anti-Misogynist Wife of Bath," *Chaucer Review* 10, no. 4 (1976): 287–302; Mark Amsler, "The Wife of Bath and Women's Power," *Assays* 4 (1987): 67–83; or Carolyn Dinshaw, "'Glose/Bele Chose': The Wife of Bath and Her Glossators," in *Critical Essays on Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. Thomas C. Stillinger (New York: G. K. Hall &

behavior renders her more a masculine than a feminine figure.[60] Perhaps the only point on which all of these scholars agree is that the Wife's performance certainly incorporates "an image of woman that duplicates the *mala femina* of the misogynist tractates."[61] In sum, Alison is endlessly fascinating, and as Arthur Lindley has pointed out, straightforward explanations of her attitudes and presentation are impossible and therefore undesirable.[62] In the discussion which follows, I do not propose to revolutionize interpretation of the Wife of Bath; indeed, my examination of the surface use of a stereotype does not particularly challenge any of these viewpoints. My sole purpose is to show that fears of women's mobility were central to the way in which she was presented, and it is my hope that reading her in that context may help provide nuance to other critical approaches and also to the reading of other texts that feature mobile women. In that context, I would propose that Alison drew upon La Vielle and shared that character's concern with social status, but that she valued sexual pleasure more highly as an end in itself, rather than treating it as a means to an end.

Wanderlust was one of Alison of Bath's hallmark traits when she was introduced in the General Prologue. It is, after all, her status as a pilgrim and a member of the narrator's pilgrimage group that brings her to the reader's attention, and as Chaucer commented in the General Prologue, "she knew much about wandering along the road."[63] The list of her pilgrimages shows that "she has in fact visited all the major shrines in Christendom."[64] She described other types of

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Co., 1998), 112–132. On the Wife as misogynist, see Bernard Huppé, *A Reading of the Canterbury Tales* (Albany: State University of New York, 1962), 107–135; Anne Laskaya, *Chaucer's Approach to Gender in the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995), 178; or Julia Bolton Holloway, "Perverse Pilgrims: Chaucer's Wife and Pardoner," in *Essays on Pilgrimage and Literature* (New York: AMS Press, 1998), 173–189.

[60] See the summary and discussion of this strain of thought in Elizabeth M. Biebel, "A Wife, A Batterer, a Rapist: Representations of 'Masculinity' in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* and *Tale*," in *Masculinities in Chaucer: Approaches to Maleness in the Canterbury Tales and Troilus and Criseyde*, ed. Peter G. Beider (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1988), 63–75.

[61] Oberembt, "Chaucer's Anti-Misogynist Wife of Bath," 299.

[62] Arthur Lindley, "'Vanysshed was this Daunce, He Nyste Where': Alisoun's Absence in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*," *English Literary History* 59 (1992), 1–21, esp. 2. A similar opinion has been voiced by Elaine Treharne, "The Stereotype Confirmed? Chaucer's Wife of Bath," in *Writing Gender and Genre in Medieval Literature: Apporaches to Old and Middle English Texts*, ed. Treharne (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), 96.

[63] Chaucer, "General Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 31, line 467: "She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye."

[64] Warren Ginsberg, "Chaucer's Disposition," in *The Endless Knot: Essays on Old and*

religious observance that she had used as an opportunity to wander, as well. One Lent, while her husband was away and she "had better leisure to play,"[65] she went on "visits / to vigils and processions, / and also to preachings and to those pilgrimages, / to miracle plays and marriages."[66] Here Alison, as Amis had, categorized all sorts of travel as essentially the same; whether she was going to meet with a friend or going on a pilgrimage, all of her wandering was an expression of the same habit. Later, in the introduction to her tale, Alison once again reminded us of her enjoyment of mobility: "For I always loved to be merry / and to walk in March, April, and May / from house to house, to hear sundry stories…".[67]

Her five husbands challenged Alison's desire for mobility, their responses reiterating the complaints of Theophrastus and Amis. Alison demonstrated for her fellow pilgrims how she would argue with her first three husbands (all of whom were older and wealthy) for the privilege to gad about by drawing attention to their double standard in the matter. In so doing, Chaucer took Theophrastus' parody of an angry wife and placed it, word-for-word, Alison's mouth: "What do you do at my neighbor's house? / Is she so fair? Are you so amorous? /….And if I have a gossip or a friend / without guilt, you chide like a fiend / if I should walk or go to his house for fun!"[68] Mobility was also a central issue in her power struggle with her fifth husband, Jankin. He responded to her persistent wandering in a private sermon which listed classical and biblical examples of men who rejected women for inappropriate public appearances. Alison recounted his speech thusly:

Middle English in Honor of Marie Borroff, ed. M. Theresa Tavormina and R. F. Yaeger (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995), 134.

[65] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 112, line 551: "I hadde the bettre leyser for to pleye…"

[66] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 112, lines 555–558: "Therfore I made my visitaciouns/ To vigilies and to processiouns,/ To prechyng eek and to thise pilgrimages,/ To pleyes of myracles, and mariages…"

[67] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 112, lines 543–547: "For evere yet I loved to be gay,/ And for to walke in March, Averille, and May,/ Fro hous to hous, to heere sondry talys—…"

[68] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 108, lines 239– 245: "What dostow at my neighebores hous?/ Is she so fair? Artow so amorous?/…. And if I have a gossib or a freend,/ Withouten gilt, thou chidest as a feend,/ If that I walke or pleye unto his hous!" For a comparison of Theophrastus and the Wife's *Prologue*, see Hanna and Lawler, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Correale and Hamel, 352–53 and 356–61.

> …And I wanted to walk, as I had done before,
> From house to house, although he had forbidden it.
> About which he would often preach,
> And teach me of old Roman deeds,
> How Simplicius Gallus left his wife,
> And forsook her for all his life,
> Only because he saw her bare-headed
> Looking out the door one day.
> Another Roman he told me by name,
> That, because his wife went to a summer's game
> Without his knowledge, he also forsook her.
> And then would he seek in his Bible
> That same proverb from Ecclesiaticus,
> Where he commanded and firmly forbade:
> Man should not suffer his wife to go roaming about.
> Then would he say right there, without a doubt:
> 'Whoever builds his house out of willows,
> and spurs his blind horse over plowed land,
> and suffers his wife to go seeking shrines,
> Is worthy to be hanged on a gallows![69]

Alison also followed the cues of La Vielle in that her pride and her social standing were matters of great importance to her. Early in her introduction in the General Prologue, the narrator stated that during Alison's appearances at Mass in her home parish, "In all the parish there was no wife/ that went to the offering before her/ and if they did, she was indeed so angry/ that she was put all out of charity."[70] As expressions of social status were clearly of some concern to her, it should come as no surprise that Alison displayed a lively interest in fol-

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[69] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 113–114, lines 639–658: "…And walke I wolde, as I had doon biforn,/ From hous to hous, although he had it sworn;/ For which he often tymes wolde preche,/ And me of olde Romayn geestes teche,/ How he Simplicius Gallus lefte his wyf,/ And hir forsook for terme of al his lyf,/ Noght but for open-heveded he hir say/ Lokinge out at his dore upon a day./ Another Romayn tolde he me by name,/ That, for his wyf was at a somores game/ Withouten his wityng, he forsook hire eke./ And thanne wolde he upon his Bible seke/ That ilke proverbe of Ecclesiaste/ Wher he commandeth and forbedeth faste/ Man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule aboute./ Thanne wolde he seye right thus, withouten doute:/ 'Whoso that buyldeth his hous al of salwes,/ And priketh his blinde hors over the falwes,/ And suffreth his wyf to go seken halwes,/ Is worthy to been hanged on the galwes!'"

[70] Chaucer, "General Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 30, lines 449–453: "In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon/ That to the offrynge bifore hire sholde goon;/ And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she,/ That she was out of alle charitee."

lowing La Vielle's advice about the public display of clothing. Whenever she went out, "…I wore my gay scarlet gown."[71] But while Bel Acuel was taught to exploit adulterous lovers, it was from her husbands that Alison, a townswoman living outside the context of noble courtly love, sought finery. She complained to them that "I sit at home, I have no nice clothing."[72] Chaucer also raised the concern that mobile women saw and envied the clothing of others during their peregrinations, returning home with their greed refreshed. Alison, again echoing Theophrastus, grounded at least some of her complaints to her husbands on the wardrobe of a neighbor: "Why is my neighbor's wife so gay? / She is honored above all others wherever she goes."[73] According to Alison, her husbands actually used this pride of hers to help keep her at home, telling her that a cat with singed fur would stay at home, but women with fine clothes and cats with sleek fur "…will not dwell in the house half a day, / but will go forth, before the dawn of day / to show their fur and go a-caterwauling."[74] However, having been freed by widowhood of husbandly interference during the pilgrimage described by the narrator, Alison dressed well indeed for her public appearance as a pilgrim: "Her kerchiefs were very fine of weave /—I dared to have sworn they weighed ten pounds—/ (those) that she wore on her head on a Sunday. / Her hose were of fine scarlet red / very tightly tied, and her shoes quite soft and new."[75]

In some ways, sartorial matters may have been an even higher-stakes game for an urban middle-class woman such as Alison than for a noblewoman like La Vielle. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,

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[71] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 112, line 559: "…And wered upon my gaye scarlet gytes."

[72] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 108, line 238: "I sitte at hoom; I have no thrifty clooth."

[73] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 108, lines 236–7: "Why is my neighebores wyf so gay?/ She is honoured overal ther she gooth…" For more on the interplay between Alison and Jerome's quote of Theophrastus, see Warren S. Smith, "The Wife of Bath and Dorigen Debate Jerome," in *Satiric Advice on Women and Marriage*, ed. Smith, esp. 243–256. Smith reads Alison as critiquing Jerome.

[74] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 109, lines 337–354, and especially 350—354: "She wol nat dwelle in house half a day,/ But forth she wole, er and day be dawed,/ to shewe hir skyn and goon a-caterwawed."

[75] Chaucer, "General Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 30, lines 452–457: "Hir coverchiefs ful fyne weren of ground; / I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound / That on a Sonday weren upon hir heed. / Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed, / Ful streite yteyd, and shoes ful moyste and newe."

the economic shifts caused by the Black Death and the mobility of the population had made the urban communities in which Alison lived into a "world of strangers," wherein clothing was an essential cue to an individual's place in the social hierarchy.[76] As a result, clothing was precisely encoded and regulated in order to identify an individual's social rank, and in particular to prevent wealthy urbanites from presenting themselves as being of higher a social rank than they actually were. Meanwhile, courtesy literature taught that same urban elite how best to emulate the nobility in order to maximize their social mobility.[77] Given this world of fluidity and potential, the fact that clothing was such an essential measure, and the ability of urban women to accumulate and control significant wealth through serial marriage, Alison's scarlet hose and fine headscarves need not be interpreted as mere frivolous display; such items were also effective social and economic tools.[78]

While Alison shared the desire for mobility, pride, and greed with La Vielle and her noble pupils, her priorities were not entirely the same as theirs. She was far more frank than La Vielle about the question of sexual gratification—of lust as a goal in itself, rather than simply a route to enhanced pride. Further, while she prioritized pleasure, the circumstances under which she sought it were less indiscriminate than La Vielle's vision of free love. Whether or not she did indeed commit adultery, her description of such issues as travel, lust, pride, greed, and deceit were centered within her marriages. Thus, while Jean de Meun's noble caricature described courtly affairs as a useful source of clothing, middle-class Alison instead discussed her methods for accumulating wealth by 'plucking' a string of husbands. But Alison wanted more from her husbands than economic generosity. She began her tale's prologue with a lengthy discourse defending her five marriages and her overall

[76] Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 110–111; on the shift in the fourteenth century and bourgeois consumption, see Roberta Kreuger, "'Nouvelles Choses': Social Instability and the Problem of Fashion in the *Livre de Chevalier de la Tour Landry*, The *Ménagier de Paris*, and Christine de Pizan's *Livre des trois vertus*," in *Medieval Conduct*, ed. Kathleen Ashley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 52–5.

[77] Christine M. Rose, "What Every Goodwoman Wants: The Parameters of Desire in *Le Menagier de Paris / The Goodman of Paris*," *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* 38 (2002), 396.

[78] On the accumulation of wealth through marriage, see Barbara Hanawalt, *The Wealth of Wives: Women, Law, and Economy in Late Medieval London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), especially Ch. 3.

enthusiasm for sex rather than virginity or chaste widowhood, an attitude that was central to her characterization throughout the work.[79]

Alastair Minnis has argued that her the prologue characterizes Alison as "an outrageous advocate" for sexual pleasure.[80] This theme is somewhat muted in her recollections of her first three old, rich husbands; she recounted that she would not engage in sexual intercourse with them at all until they had given her a gift, and that only after such payments had been received would she "make myself feign an appetite / and yet in bacon (i.e., preserved meat) I never did delight."[81] This complaint about the quality of her relationships with her older husbands seems, in its recounting of 'plucking men,' to reprise La Vielle, but her disavowal of desire for them as sexual partners also points towards the gratification of lust—or the lack of such gratification—as a matter of great importance to her. Alison does not make entirely clear whether or not she pursued fresher meat during these economically useful but sexually unsatisfying marriages. Although she asserted that she fought for her physical liberty, she was coy about the outcomes of such perambulations. She told the other pilgrims that she lied to these husbands about her mobility, saying that she wandered by night in order to spy on *their* wenching, and that she "had many a good time under that guise."[82] The nature of this fun was not further explained. Meanwhile, when extorting gifts from the three elderly husbands, Alison threatened that "…if I were to sell my *belle chose* / I could walk as fresh as a rose."[83] She found that they would rather pay her than be cuckolded, but the threat suggests that the thought of adultery, even if only for profit, had crossed her mind.

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[79] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 105–107, lines 1–163.

[80] Alastair Minnis, "The Wisdom of Old Women: Alison of Bath as *Auctrice*," in Helen Cooney, ed., *Writings on Love in the English Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 109.

[81] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 110, lines 407–422, and especially 416–418: "For wynnyng wolde I al his lust endure / And make me a feuned appetit; / And yet in bacon hadde I nevere delit."

[82] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 110, line 399: "…Under that colour hadde I many a myrthe."

[83] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 111, lines 447–448: "For if I wolde selle my *bele chose*, / I koude walke as fresh as is a rose…" On payment of ransom for sex, see p. 110 line 410: "…Til he had maad his ransoun unto me;…"

But Alison made a clear distinction between these three rich husbands and her later two marriages, which she claimed to have sought for the sake of sexual gratification. In particular, she revealed that her fifth marriage was intended to please her lust.[84] Indeed, she could not take her mind off of her prospective fifth husband's shapely legs as she followed the procession at her fourth husband's funeral. Although, as Tison Pugh has pointed out, Jankin's shapely legs connoted nobility, and hence, potentially, another opportunity for Alison to gain wealth, in recalling them Alison was immediately inspired to declare not her desire for gain, but rather her lust.[85] "I had the print of Saint Venus' seal. / So help me God, I was a lusty one…"[86] This frankness about physical lust and the pursuit of sexual satisfaction is fundamentally different from La Vielle's shorter discussion of the topic, which emphasized freedom, rather than the desires a woman might wish to be more free to indulge. Further, her lust was not frank merely in the re-telling of it; it should not be forgotten that Alison's descriptions of her wandering, husband-hunting, and enthusiasm for sex were offered at a time when she was once again moving freely among men, well-dressed and clearly affluent, and cheerfully proclaiming, where it came to marriage, that "The sixth is welcome."[87]

Even in discussing these later, more sexually-charged marriages, however, it is important to note that unlike La Vielle, Alison did not overtly advocate for adultery. So, for example, while she was greatly angered by her fourth husband's infidelity, Alison claimed to have paid him back for it while still remaining faithful: "I made him of the same wood a cross; / *not of my body, in no foul manner*, / but certainly, I was so friendly with people / that in his own grease I made him fry / in anger, and in true jealousy."[88] (emphasis mine.) Her denial of infidelity is a

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[84] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 112, line 526.

[85] Tison Pugh, "Squire Jankyn's Legs and Feet: Physiognomy, Social Class, and Fantasy in the Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale," *Medievalia et Humanistica* n.s. 32 (2007): 83–101.

[86] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 113, lines 604–605: "I hadde the prente of seinte Cenus seel. / As help me God, I was a lusty oon…"

[87] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 105, line 45: "Welcome the sixte, whan that evere he shal."

[88] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 111, lines 484–488: "I made hym of the same wode a croce; / Nat of my body, in no foul

striking departure from La Vielle's argument in favor of free love. On the other hand, the 'cheere' with which she treated other men was still effective in netting her a sexual partner. Alison boasted that a period of gadding about—"to see, and also to be seen, / by lusty folk,"—while her cheating fourth husband was away in London allowed her to prearrange her fifth marriage to Jankin.[89] "I say that we walked in the fields/ until truly we had such dalliance/ this clerk and I, that by my foresight / I spoke to him and told him how he/ if I were a widow, should wed me."[90] Her assertion that she did not actually cheat on her fourth husband was buttressed here by her mention of one of her friends, another "dame Alys," who accompanied the two on their stroll; she seemed to wish it to appear that this dalliance did not go beyond flirtation, and the laying of groundwork for a later marriage.[91]

Alison, then, used her mobility to indulge her pride and greed, but spoke more extensively than La Vielle had about the satisfaction of lust. Ann S. Haskell has also suggested that a more sly gesture towards the motif of the oversexualized female pilgrim is slipped into Alison's complaint about her unfaithful fourth husband. As she is about to tell of her own feigned infidelity, she exclaims: "But he was quit, by God and St. Joce!"[92] Haskell pointed out that St. Joce was a patron of pilgrims, and was typically portrayed bearing a pilgrim's staff or *bourdon* (a word which was used elsewhere in the *Tales* as a pun on 'phallus'). Hence, in swearing by St. Joce about her own infidelity, Alison once again invoked the idea of the regalia of pilgrimage as male genitalia.[93] But this *bourdon* reference, like that made in the carnival vulva-pilgrim badge, was a gesture towards male genitalia that a feminine pilgrim held, controlled, and used to meet her own goals.

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manere, / But certeinly, I made folk swich cheere, / That in his owene grece I made hym frye / For angre, and for verray jalousye."

[89] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 112, lines 552–3: "And for to se, and eek for to be seye / Of lusty folk."

[90] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 112, lines 564–569: "I seye that in the feeldes walked we,/ Til trewely we hadde swich daliance,/ This clerk and I, that of my purveiance,/ I spak to him and seyde him how that he,/ If I were wydwe, sholde wedde me."

[91] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 112, line 548.

[92] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 111, lines 483–484: "But he was quit, by God and by Seint Joce! "

[93] Haskell, "The St. Joce Oath," 86.

Finally, Chaucer's caricature may have differed from those of Jean de Meun in her social class and her motivation, but she too used deceit to enable her behavior. Alison explained that deceit was as innate to women as suffering and household tasks: "…For all such wit is given to us at birth. / God has given deceit, weeping, and spinning / By nature to women while they live."[94] Thus, she echoed La Vielle nearly word for word, declaring that "No man can half so boldly / swear and lie as a woman can."[95] She proudly provided detailed descriptions of her ruses, including, as we have seen, the lies that defended her nighttime wandering, and her feigned sadness at the funeral of her fourth husband.[96] But Alison's bourgeois environment caused her to seek different help in her deceit. La Vielle advised her pupils to turn for help to female servants and the women of their immediate family, those who would surround them in a noble household. Alison, however, was an urban wife, and so her deceit was achieved not only through family, but also through the peers with whom should would have had daily contact in her urban setting, and especially through her *gossips* or *commères*—those with whom she shared the bond of baptismal co-parenthood, which had been a significant social tie since the sixth century.[97] In accord with La Vielle, she used deceitful tactics taught her by her mother to woo Jankin, telling him she had dreamed of him, even though "…all was false—I never dreamed of him, / But I always followed my mother's teaching / As well in this as in many other things."[98] But her mother was not her only helper in this; Jankin was staying at the home of another of her gossips at the time, and as we have seen Alison wooed him while out walking with him and another

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[94] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 110, lines 400–402: "For al swich wit is yeven us in oure byrthe./ Deceite, wepyng, spynnyng God hath yive/ To wommen kyndely, whyl that they may lyve."

[95] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 108, lines 228–9: "For half so boldely kan ther no man/ Swere and lyen, as a womman kan." See also Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, 30, line 18129; also, *Le Roman de la Rose* vol. 3, 43, lines 18093–18098: "il fust occurcie et troublee, / tant eüst la langue doublee / et diverses plicacions / a trover excusacions / car riens ne jure ne ne mant / de fame plus hardiemant…"

[96] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 113, line 589.

[97] Joseph H. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 337.

[98] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 112, lines 583–5: "And al was fals; I dremed of it right naught,/ But as I folwed ay my dames lore,/ As wel of this as of othere thynges moore."

female friend.[99] After they married, she helped to keep Jankin under her control by sharing embarrassing details about him with two of her female friends and her niece.[100] Thus, although she inhabited a social landscape and was motivated by impulses somewhat different from La Vielle's; Alison was nonetheless a lusty, greedy, proud, deceitful pilgrim. She stands as perhaps the single most complex and engaging example of the trope under discussion here.

The Quinze Joyes de Mariage

This tract, written anonymously but often attributed to Antoine de la Sale, is a satire of marriage based on the Fifteen Joys of Mary; in each of the fifteen 'joys,' a husband's misery derived from the ill behavior of his wife.[101] Thus, "in the satire, the premise, that a virtuous and good woman can help lead others through dialogue to a more virtuous life, is subverted. Instead, the woman who appears good turns out to be evil, and instead of leading man to his salvation, she leads to his destruction."[102] The hypothetical wife in each of the Joys was "a wily, shark-like predator seeking sexual gratification, ostentatious finery, physical satisfaction, and domestic *seignurie*."[103] Among the repetitions of misogynist complaint employed by the author is the fear that women's mobility, and of pilgrimage in particular, was an occasion for lust, pride, and deceit. However, as the author of the *Quinze Joyes de Mariage* built multiple hypothetical scenarios, he did not need to privilege one construction of causality above another.

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[99] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 112, lines 528–9 and 548.

[100] Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 112, lines 530–542.

[101] Katharina M. Wilson and Elizabeth M. Makowski, *Wykked Wyves and the Woes of Marriage: Misogamous Literature from Juvenal to Chaucer* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 143. The work, however, has also recently been read as a satire of medical writing; see Jean Batany, "Peut-on rire de la description médicale d'un syndrome? Les *Quinze joies de mariage,*" in *Grant risee? The Medieval Comic Presence: Essays in Memory of Brian J. Levy*, ed. Alan P. Tudor and Alan Hindley (Tounhout: Brepols, 2006), 47–92.

[102] Prudence Allen, R. S. M., *The Concept of Woman: Volume II, The Early Humanist Reformation, 1250–1500* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Erdman's Publishing Co., 2002), 455.

[103] Brent A. Pitts, "Feast and Famine in the *Quinze Joyes de Mariage*," *Romance Notes* 26, no. 1 (1985): 69–70.

The author of the *Quinze Joyes* strongly asserted that wives like to wander on pilgrimages (as well as to other events); their varied but always illicit goals were often served by first achieving physical mobility. In eight of the Joys, the marriage's disintegration into misery stemmed at least in part from the wife's outings to banquets, feasts, pilgrimages, secret meetings with lovers, and to church. In the Second Joy, for example, the author began with this complaint, which lay sacred and the secular gatherings side-by side: "the lady…goes to numerous feasts, gatherings, and pilgrimages…" This freedom of movement, in the author's opinion, led to situations where such a woman "often departs from the straight and narrow path…"[104] Two of the joys, however, hinge specifically upon pilgrimage. The Eighth Joy told of a pilgrimage that was forced upon a husband by his wife, whose intent was entirely frivolous; the author dolefully judged that she and her friends "decide to go on a journey because they cannot do as they would in their own homes."[105] This Joy described how miserable the process of pilgrimage could be for the husband who must both overspend and also serve his wife's needs constantly on the journey. In it, the author also warned that pilgrimage lent itself to the development of further wanderlust. After one pilgrimage, "henceforth she will wish to travel and be on the highroad now that she has once begun."[106] Later, in the Eleventh Joy, a young woman and her mother planned and carried out a local, day-long pilgrimage in order to allow her to court a potential husband.[107] Worse even than this mixing of the religious and the secular was the motivation behind the courtship. This pilgrimage was carefully orchestrated to help the girl to snare the young man and marry him quickly because, unbeknownst to him, she was already pregnant by another.

Although all of the accusations made in the *Quinze Joyes* seem quite familiar in light of such figures as La Vielle and Alison of Bath, the impulse which caused the hypothetical wives of the *Quinze Joyes* to wander varied according to their situation. Lust was the central factor

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[104] Elisabeth Abbot, ed. and trans., *The Fifteen Joys of Marriage* (London: The Orion Press, 1959), 31–34; also, Jean Rychener, ed., *Les XV Joies de Mariage* (Paris: Librarie Minard, 1967), 14, lines 4–5: "…et va a pleuseurs festes, assemblees et pelerinages…" and 16, lines 73–4: "La se met aucuneffoiz hors de son charroy…"

[105] *The Fifteen Joys*, 129; also, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, 67, lines 50–2: "…et ont entreprins d'aller en voiage, pour ce qu'ilz ne peuent pas bien faire a leur guise en leurs mesons."

[106] *The Fifteen Joys*, 134; also, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, 70, lines 162–3: "Dorenavant elle vouldra voiager et estre tourjours par chemins, puis que el y a commencé."

[107] *The Fifteen Joys*, 163; also, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, 87.

in some wives' behavior. In one case where the husband was forced to allow his wife to travel, she was supposed to go along with female relatives or gossips and "her (male) cousin who, perhaps, is no kin at all, but she is wont to say so and for good reason."[108] The pilgrim-wife of the Eighth Joy had similarly lustful motives, expressed in nearly identical terms. Before the author described the misery of a husband who accompanied his wife on pilgrimage, he described the problems for a husband who stayed at home. The wife might plan to bring a male cousin "who, perhaps, is not her cousin at all, but only in a manner of speaking."[109] The author further speculated that once her group set out, "perhaps a certain gallant will go in the company and he will do her pleasure and service on the way, of his wealth and of his courtesy."[110]

Other hypothetical wives of the *Quinze Joyes* were driven to wander by their pride and greed, and regarded lust as a secondary matter, much as La Vielle had. The pregnant young woman of the Eleventh Joy had clearly indulged her lust in the recent past, but as she and her mother were using pilgrimage to catch her a husband who could prevent dishonor, they were attending to their pride and their social standing. The wife of the Fifth Joy was also driven by both lust and pride. She found her husband sexually unappealing and was carrying on with a lover whenever he was away, but would only willingly and cheerfully agree to intercourse with her spouse when she "would have a new gown or something else from her husband…;"[111] at any other time, she "wishe(d) she were elsewhere."[112] On the other hand, the wife of the First Joy is a clear example of the woman who seeks only to 'pluck' men in order to feed her greed and pride. This Joy is little more than an expansion of Theophrastus' portrait of the wife who keeps her husband awake at night with complaints about her clothing. In this version, the wife sought a new gown from her husband because she

[108] *The Fifteen Joys*, 31; also, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, 14, lines 5–9: "…et, pour ce, emprent avecques sa cousine, sa commere et son cousin, qui a l'aventure ne lui est rien, mais elle a acoustumé ainxin dire, et pour cause…"

[109] *The Fifteen Joys*, 129; also, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, 67, lines 49–50: "…qui a l'aventure ne lui est rien, mais c'est la maniere de dire…"

[110] *The Fifteen Joys*, 131; also, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, 68, lines 91–94: "Et a l'aventure ira ung tel galant en la compaignie qui li fera plaisir et service voulentiers sur le chemin du bien de lui et de sa courtoisie."

[111] *The Fifteen Joys*, 78; also, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, 38, lines 198–9: "Mais s'il avient que ceste dame vieult avoir robe ou altre chouse de son mary…"

[112] *The Fifteen Joys*, 77; also, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, 38, lines 178–180: "…et la dame, a qui il souvient d'aultre chose, voullist estre ailleurs…"

went to a feast, and that public outing stimulated her pride and greed; she complained that "there was no woman (no matter how lowly her estate) so poorly dressed as I."[113] This woman was not easily dismissed; instead, she skillfully used emotional manipulation and sexual rejection to cajole her husband into providing a new gown which he could not actually afford. The expensive finery was then "shown off at many a church and many a dance."[114]

As in other works, the roaming women of the *Quinze Joyes* encountered opposition and anger from their spouses, but had help from their networks of female friends and relatives in the deception required to achieve and cover up their illicit goals. The female allies might apply social pressure to win the wife her way; so, for example, a woman's *commères* helped to convince the husband to let the wife go to "numerous feasts, gatherings, and pilgrimages" in the Second Joy.[115] As we have seen, friends and *commères* also helped to plan and then attended a woman's pilgrimage in the Eighth Joy. But they might also lie, or conspire together to carry out their aims in secret. Female servants carried messages between wives and their lovers in the Fifth Joy, for example. Women's networks also played a crucial role in justifying travel in the Tenth Joy. In a marginally empathetic twist on this pattern of masculine control and feminine deceit, the wife in Tenth Joy roamed because of her husband's mistreatment: "Sometimes, perhaps, because of the ugly rows he makes and also because he beats her, she deserts her husband and goes on a journey."[116] But even this situation had originally been created by the errant wife. Their arguments were the result of her infidelity, and when she ran off she spent time with her lover. She subsequently organized a cover-up with the women of her support network, having "some of her friends persuade her mother to say she has been with her all the time."[117] This anonymous author

[113] *The Fifteen Joys*, 18; also, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, 7, lines 58–60: "…je croy qu'il n'y avoit femme, tant fust elle de petit estat, qui fust si mal abillée come je estoye,…"

[114] *The Fifteen Joys*, 25; also, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, 12, lines 212–214: "…la sainture et la chapperon a l'avenant qui seront moustrez en maintes eglises et a maintes dances."

[115] *The Fifteen Joys*, 31; also, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, 14, lines 4–5: "…et va a pleuseurs festes, assemblees et pelerinages."

[116] *The Fifteen Joys*, 149; also, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, 79, lines 57–61: "Et aucuneffoiz elle pourchace a lui faire villennie, qui est avenu a pluseurs. Et aucuneffoiz avient que pour les malles noises qu'il li maine et auxi qu'il la bat, qu'elle se va et plante son mari pour reverdir…"

[117] *The Fifteen Joys*, 150; also, *Les XV Joies de Mariage*, 80, lines 65–7: "…elle a

of the *Quinze Joyes*, then, reiterated all of the main arguments of the complaint against feminine mobility, and applied them in multiple configurations.

The Twa Mariit Wemen and the Wedo

Dunbar's early sixteenth-century poem *The Tretis of the Twa Mariit Wemen and the Wedo* features a conversation about marriage between a widow and two young wives.[118] The conversation was overheard and reported by a male narrator, who addressed his poem to male listeners, thus warning them about women's misbehavior in traditionally misogynist terms.[119] The three female caricatures of Dunbar's poem are each believed to be derived in some part from the Wife of Bath, but Dunbar adopted the structure used by Jean de Meun of an older female mentor who teaches younger women. Although they are visually depicted as courtly ladies, the wives' use of language suggests a more bourgeois sensibility, and as such they represent a castigation of women of all social classes.[120]

The first of the two young wives to share her views on marriage embodied the trope of the woman wanderer, openly expressing her desire for physical mobility. Amidst her complaints against her husband, this wife wished aloud that humans, like birds, could take a new mate each year. She imagined what her freedom of movement would be like, if this were so:[121]

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aucuns de ses amis qui traictant avecques la mere, qu'elle die qu'elle a tourjours esté avecques elle…"

[118] For discussion of the models other than Chaucer's Wife of Bath on which Dunbar drew in the poem, see Roy J. Pearcy, "The Genre of William Dunbar's *Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*," *Speculum* 51, no. 1 (1980), 58–74, and Klaus Bitterling, "*The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*: Some Comments on Words, Imagry, and Genre," in *Scottish Language and Literature, Medieval and Renaissance: Fourth International Conference 1984, Proceedings*, ed. Dietrich Strauss and Horst W. Drescher (Frankfurt am Main: Verlang Peter Lang, 1986), 337–358.

[119] Wendy A. Matlock, "Secrets, Gossip, and Gender in William Dunbar's *The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wmen and the Wedo*," *Philological Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (2004), 210.

[120] Matlock, "Secrets, Gossip, and Gender," 213, has summarized the critical responses to the women's inconsistent class attributes.

[121] William Dunbar, "The Tretis of the Twa Mariit Wemen and the Wedo," in *William Dunbar: Selected Poems*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt (New York: Longman, 1996), 37, lines 70–71: "I suld at fairis be found new facies to se, / At playis and at preichingis and pilgrimages greit…" Modern renderings are the author's own.

> I should at fairs be found, new faces for to see,
> At plays and preachings and pilgrimages great…

Note that she repeated the grouping of pilgrimage with other public activities both secular and sacred, as they all suited her purposes in more or less the same fashion. Indeed, her list of outings was nearly a direct quote of Chaucer's Alison or Jean de Meun's La Vielle. Later, the Wedo reiterated this take on pilgrimage as a convenient opportunity for public mobility, phrasing her comment in the past tense of memory, rather than in the subjunctive of wishing: "On the passing of pilgrimage I prided myself very much, / more for the crowds of people than for the winning of any pardon."[122]

In their reasons for seeking these outings, Dunbar's three women share Alison's bold emphasis on the importance of sexual satisfaction.[123] This was the explanation given by the first wife when she asserted that humans should be able to imitate the mating habits of birds:[124]

> God grant that matrimony was intended for sex for one year!…
> Birds have a better law than men by far
> That enjoy a new mate with joy each year
> And take a fresh mate, unwearied and constant
> And let their tired mates fly where they please.
> Christ grant that such a custom were observed in this country!
> Then it would be well for us women that we had ever been born.
> We would have fresh mates to take as we liked
> And dismiss all impotent men when they lacked desire.

An implicit Aristotelian warning about the dangers of insatiable female lust is embedded within this flight of fancy. The first wife assumed that after a year in a woman's company, a man will be "impotent" and

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[122] Dunbar, "The Tretis of the Twa Mariit Wemen and the Wedo," in *William Dunbar: Selected Poems*, ed. Bawcutt, 55, lines 474–75: "In passing of pilgrymage I pride me full mekle, / Mair for the prese of peple na ony pardon wynyng."

[123] For discussion of this linguistic boldness, see Edwina Burness, 'Female Language in *The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*," in *Scottish Language and Literature, Medieval and Renaissance: Fourth International Conference 1984, Proceedings*, ed. Dietrich Strauss and Horst W. Drescher (Frankfurt am Main: Verlang Peter Lang, 1986), 359–368.

[124] Dunbar, "The Tretis," 37, lines 56 and 60–8: "God gif matrimony wer made to mell for ane yeir!/…. Birdis hes ane better law na bernis be meikill, / That ilk yeir with new joy joyis ane maik / And fangis thame ane fresche feyr, unfulyeit and constant, / and lattis thair fulyeit feiris flie quhair thai pleis. / Chryst gif sic ane consuetude war in this kith haldin! / Than weill war us wemen that evir we war born. / We suld have feiris as fresche to fang quhen us likit / And gif all larbaris thair leveis quhen thai lak curage."

"tired," and the woman will be in need of a mate who is "unwearied." Dunbar repeated this monition about lustful women who exhaust men's sexual capacity in the complaint of the second wife. She claimed that her husband was a "whore-master" who, though young, could not please her because he diminished his virility through sexual relations with too many women.[125] The speeches of both wives, then, placed the concept of women's rapacious sexuality center-stage, and simultaneously demonized it by pointing out its dangers to men.

As in Alison's relationships with her first three husbands, then, it was disproportionate lust that left both of Dunbar's wives deeply dissatisfied with their marriages, and lead the first Wife to imagine herself with the freedom to travel in order to attract better sexual partners.[126] Furthermore, it was also for the sake of lust that Dunbar's first wife took a strong interest in her clothing and in public display; pride and greed were, for her, steps towards a sexual goal. After listing the public events she would visit each year if she were free to seek a new mate, she explained that she wished to do so "To show my renown royally where there was press of folk / To manifest my elegance to a multitude of men / And display my beauty abroad where there were many lovers…"[127] This imagined sartorial elegance was the subject of specific description. She pictured herself "…full seemly in silks arrayed / Graceful, merry, and elegant, right joyous and elegant."[128] Later, she explained how the relationship between her greed, pride, and lust functioned in her real life, rather than her daydreams. When she described her dreary reality—a loveless marriage to an old man whom she found physically repulsive—she took some small solace in his ability to pay her in clothing for their sexual relations:[129]

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[125] Dunbar, "The Tretis," 42, lines 168 ff.

[126] See also the discussion in Matlock, "Secrets, Gossip, and Gender," 217–218.

[127] Dunbar, "The Tretis," 37–8, lines 70–74: "I suld at fairis be found new facies to se, / At playis and at preichingis and pilgrimages greit, / To schwa my renone royaly quhair preis was of folk, / To manifest my makdome to multitude of pepill / And blaw my bewtie on breid quair bernis war mony…"

[128] Dunbar, "The Tretis," 37, lines 68–9: "My self suld be full semlie in silkis arrayit, / Gymp, jolie, and gent, richt joyus and gent."

[129] Dunbar, "The Tretis," 40, lines 137–9: "For or he clym on my corse, that carybald forlane, / I have condition of a curche, or kersp allther fynest, / A goun of engranyt claith right gaily furrit…"

> And though his penis pays me poorly in bed,
> His purse pays richly in recompense afterwards.
> For ere he climbs on my body, that worthless monster,
> I make the condition that I get a kerchief of the finest fabric
> A gown of scarlet cloth, right gaily furred…

Here, Dunbar echoed the wife of the Second Joy and also Chaucer's Alison, who each demanded payment for sex with their husbands. Indeed, in this passage Dunbar even cited two of the Wife of Bath's distinctive clothing items: the scarlet gown and the finely-woven headscarves.[130] The latter of these two had appeared in Theophrastus' complaint, as well. But this wife's desire to trade husbands annually and her woe over her lack of sexual satisfaction, even in light of the material wealth her husband offered, make clear that Dunbar's first wife, like Alison, had 'no taste for bacon.' Both found that the satiation of their lust was a somewhat more important matter than the expansion of their wardrobe.

Finally, as Wendy Matlock has noted, the poem's three women reprise La Vielle, Alison, and the wives of the *Quinze Joyes* in that they are experts at deceit. The widow, in particular, described in some detail the lies she used to make her despised husbands think of her as meek and submissive, a pose which gave her more opportunity to meet with lovers.[131] Indeed, the unkind and candid descriptions of their husbands' flaws offered by the three women—who constitute a feminine network, specifically engaged in a process of teaching and enabling deceit, like La Vielle and her pupils or Alison and her gossips—took place in an isolated, secretive location, and was only reported by the coincidental presence of a male eavesdropper.

The Restriction of Women's Mobility in Italian Satire and Allegory

While northern and southern Europe shared in the tradition of learned misogyny, there were also significant regional differences in women's

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[130] Scarlet denoted a textile pattern, although it later came to be associated with a dark red color; see John H. Munro, "The Medieval Scarlet and the Economics of Sartorial Splendour," in *Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Europe: Essays in Memory of Professor E. M. Carus-Wilson*, ed. Kenneth G. Ponting and N. B. Harte (London: Heinemann and The Pasold Research Fund. 1983), 13–70.

[131] Matlock, "Secrets, Gossip, and Gender," 220–1.

social leverage, and in their physical mobility in particular. As Herlihy argued for Italian women, "at all times the weight of custom and the shape of society hampered their social—and hence, economic—independence."[132] South of the Alps, the age of marriage tended to be lower for women and the difference in age between spouses greater than was common in northern Europe; new, independent households were not as routinely formed by new married couples as they were further north; and both law and social mores tended to limit women's business opportunities. With women less frequently serving as sole household managers or engaging in business, they were more frequently expected to remain in the home.[133] Jankin may have wanted his wife to stay at home, but she clearly felt she had room to negotiate, argue, or even physically fight about the matter; but Italian authors worked instead with the expectation that a husband might reasonably expect to be able to sequester his wife in their home. This desire for wifely immobility, however, was a result of the same fears and associations which fueled northern European satire.

Boccacio's *Decamerone* provides several examples of this somewhat different mode of expression. The seventh day's tales, all of which told of women who fool and cuckold their husbands, did not begin, as the *Quinze Joyes* so often had, with the mobility of the women in question. Instead, most of these women committed their sexual crimes within their homes. Even so, their husbands made it absolutely clear that they mistrusted what would happen *if* their wives *were* to move around outside of the home.[134] Even women who remained dutifully stationary in Boccaccio's tales suffered at the hands of husbands who feared their desire to roam. The fifth tale specifically features a jealous husband who kept his wife locked up in their house. He would not allow his bored

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[132] David Herlihy, *Opera Muliebria: Women and Work in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 168.

[133] For more comparative commentary on marriage, work, and family formation in northern and southern Europe, see Diane Owen Hughes, "From Brideprice to Dowry in Mediterranean Europe," *Journal of Family History* 3 (1978): 262–296; J. Hajnal, "Two Kinds of Preindustrial Household Formation Systems," *Population and Developemnt Review* 8, no. 3 (1982): 449–494; and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, "Parrains et filleuls: Étude comparative," in *La maison et le nom: Strategies et rituels dans l'Italie de la Renaissance* (Paris: Editions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1990), 109–122.

[134] See, for example, the seventh day's fifth tale: Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, 2nd edition, ed. and trans. G. H. McWilliam (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 507 ff; also, Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. Vittore Branca (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1985), 583 ff.

wife "to attend a party or a wedding, or go to church, or step outside her door for a single moment…"[135] Note here that the list of dangerous public events again commingles sacred and secular activities. Boccaccio did not list pilgrimage specifically, but he did mention other Christian rituals and processions. Further, when this wife finally did get leave from her husband to go out of the house, it was for religious purposes, to "go to church on Christmas morning and to go to confession and Holy Communion, like any other Christian."[136] This brief, religiously-motivated excursion justified her husband's anxiety, in that it became the centerpiece of a successful cuckolding scheme.

Boccaccio adulterous plots repeatedly underscored the truth of masculine fears about women's behavior, but he nonetheless also suggested an unusual causation for their adultery. He explained in more than one instance that husbands' attempts to sequester their wives could actually drive women to vice. As such his work is unique among the sources addressed here in portraying women as motivated by lust, and by a love of mobility, but also by contrariness or spite. The aforementioned bored wife only pursued an adulterous relationship because of the husband's jealousy: "For her own amusement, finding herself persecuted so unfairly by her husband, the lady cast about her to see whether she could find any way of supplying him with a just and proper motive for his jealousy."[137] Another of the heroines of the seventh day, Monna Ghita, was also prompted to wander in search of a lover because her husband "grew jealous of her without any reason," a jealousy he could only explain "in vague and illogical terms."[138]

Monna Ghita deserves special attention because she was one of the few wives in Boccaccio's work who did indeed wander physically. She

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[135] Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. and trans. McWilliam, 507; also, Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. Branca, 583: " La donna, lasciamo stare che a nozze o a festa o a chiesa andar potesse, o il piè della casa trarre in alcun modo…"

[136] Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, ed. and trans. McWilliam, 508; also, Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. Branca, 584: "…ella voleva andar la mattina della pasqua alla chiesa e confessarsi e comunicarsi come fanno gli altri cristiani…"

[137] Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, ed. and trans. McWilliam, 507; also, Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. Branca, 583: "Per che, veggendosi a torto fare ingiuria al marito, s'avvisò a consolazion di se medesima di trovar modo, se alcuno ne potesse trovare, di far sì che a ragione le fosse fatto…"

[138] Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, ed. and trans. McWilliam, 501; also, Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. Branca, 577: "…della quale egli senza saper perché prestamente divenne geloso, di che la donna avvedendosi prese sdegno; e più volte avendolo della cagione della sua gelosia addomandato né egli alcuna avendone saputa assegnare se non cotal generali e cattive…"

was able to carry out her adulterous retribution by encouraging her husband to drink to excess, and then meeting with a lover while he slept off the alcohol's effects. Such meetings

> soon became a regular habit of theirs, and they met together in perfect safety. Indeed, the lady came to rely so completely on the fellow's talent for drinking himself unconscious that she made bold, not only to admit her lover to the premises, but on occasion to go and spend a goodly part of the night with him at his own house, which was no great distance away.[139]

All of the other tales of the seventh day depict women sneaking their lovers into their own homes (as the narrator mentions Ghita sometimes did); as such, Ghita's willingness to pass outside of her home in search of illicit sex was unusually daring and risky. When her husband found out about the affair, his response was to erode further the public/private boundary that Ghita had transgressed by making her wandering public knowledge. Having feigned drunkenness one night, he arose and locked Ghita out after she had left, telling her upon her return that "you won't return to this house till I've made an example of you in front of your kinsfolk and neighbors."[140] Ghita cleverly faked suicide in order to draw him out of the house, rushed inside through the open door, and locked *him* out, thus saving her own respectability and making *him* the object of public scorn. While we hear little of pride or greed in her story, Ghita's mobility, lust, and deception do match up with other sources.

Perhaps because his taboo against women's mobility was stronger, the only young woman who traveled extensively in the course of Boccaccio's collection exhibited an unbridled sort of libertinism that moved well beyond the sexual or economic scheming of women in northern satire. In the second day's seventh tale, a virgin princess was shipwrecked on her way to her wedding (a ceremony with both religious and secular implications.) As a result, she became the captive and sexual companion of nine different men over the course of four years. These men

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[139] Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, ed. and trans. McWilliam, 502; also, Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. Branca, 578: "…e tanta di fidanza nella costui ebbrezza prese, che non solamente avea preso ardire di menarsi il suo amante in casa, ma ella tavolta gran parte della notte s'andava con lui a dimorare alla sua, la qual di quivi non era guari lontana."

[140] Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, ed. and trans. McWilliam, 502; also, Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. Branca, 579: "…tu non ci tornerai mai infino a tanto che io di questa cosa, in presenza de' parenti tuoi e de' vicini, te n'avrò fatto quell'onore che ti si conviene."

transported her all over the Mediterranean, and hence travel looms large throughout her story. Although the stories of that day were about reversals of fortune before which their heroes and heroines are helpless, the Princess Alatiel did not seem to suffer overmuch from her bad luck. She simply fell in love, and into bed, with each of the men who captured her, and while she was sometimes sad when she was parted from them by fate, she always fell easily in love with the next one who came to possess her. Alatiel's fickleness and sexual eagerness are exemplified in her relationship with her first lover, Pericone. Although he had captured her and was wooing her, the princess told her ladies in waiting "to preserve their chastity, declaring her own determination to submit to no man's pleasure except her husband's."[141] As it turned out, all that it took to overcome this determination was a generous dose of wine, after which

> she then undressed in front of Pericone as if he were one of her maidservants.… She had no conception of the kind of horn that men do their butting with, and when she felt what was happening, it was almost as if she regretted having turned a deaf ear to Pericone's flattery, and could not see why she had waited for an invitation before spending her nights so agreeably.[142]

From this point forward, all throughout her wanderings she was quite a willing lover, and her husband-to-be, with whom she was eventually united, never found out that he had been cuckolded nine times before she even arrived at his court.

Despite differences in patterns of mobility or motivation, the women of the *Decamerone*, like Alison of Bath or the young women in La Vielle's tutelage, relied on their close relationships to other women to carry out their crimes and to cover them up. All ten of the tales from the seventh day take as their theme women who deceived and cuckolded their husbands; in eight out of the ten stories, these wives were able to sneak lovers into and out of their homes under the noses of their husbands. In five of the stories, such deceptions were possible

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[141] Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, ed. and trans. McWilliam, 129; Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. Branca, 156: "…oltre a questo sommamente confortandole a conservare la loro castità, affermando sé avere seco proposto che mai di lei se non il suo marito goderebbe."

[142] Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, ed. and trans. McWilliam, 130; Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. Branca, 156–7: "….quasi come se Pericone una delle sue femine fosse, senza alcun ritegno di vergogna in presenza di lui spogliatasi.… non avendo mai davanti saputo con che corno gli uomini cozzano, quasi pentuta del non avere alle lusinghe di Pericone assentito, senza attendere d'essere a così dolci notti invitata, spesse volte se stessa invitava non con le parole, ché non si sapea fare intendere, ma co' fatti."

in part because the cooped-up wives had loyal maidservants willing to aid in their schemes.[143] Often, these lower-class maidservants, whose chastity was less valuable to the head of household than that of the wife, enacted the mobility denied to the stories' respectably married heroines. Boccaccio's heroines, then, often relied on vertical social attachments for help, in much the same way that La Vielle encouraged her pupils to do.

Another brief example of the trope of the female wanderer appeared in Dante's *Divine Comedy*; this iteration of the trope did in fact enjoy personal mobility, but she had both the heavy-handedness and the safe distance of allegory. As Dante's poet-narrator was near to exiting Purgatory, he encountered a series of allegorical depictions of the sufferings of the Church. The last of these used the image of the Whore of Babylon from Revelations to represent the events leading to the Papacy's move to Avignon.[144] In the short but densely allusive passage, the Whore appeared in a cart recently abandoned by Beatrice, Dante's guide (and hence a *good* female traveler). The Whore, a stand-in for the Papacy, was "ungirt," and had "eyes quick to *rove around*" (emphasis mine), descriptors that pointed towards inappropriate dress and the fear, documented elsewhere, that an unobstructed view of others in a public place would inculcate inappropriate desire in women. She sat in a cart, an object associated both with mobility and with public shame.[145] Although representations of the Church as feminine usually evoke the image of the Bride of Christ, this feminized church was lustful and adulterous; she was publicly kissing a male giant who represented the French monarchy (a politicized paramour inappropriate for the Church). But even as she did this "she turned her lustful and wandering eye" on the narrator, and, in jealousy, the giant beat her and drew her away into the woods.[146] Here, Dante associated mobility, inappropriate

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[143] For a systematic description of these plots, see Marga Cottino-Jones, "Comic Modalities in the *Decameron*," *Genre* 9, no. 4 (1977): 436. Maidservants figure in the first, third, sixth, eighth, and ninth stories of the seventh day.

[144] Singleton, *The Divine Comedy: Purgatorio*, vol. 2, "Commentary," (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), Canto XXXII, 805–807.

[145] David J. Shirt, "Chrétien de Troyes and the Cart," in W. Rothwell, W. R. J. Barron, David Blamires, and Lewis Thorpe, eds., *Studies in Medieval Literature and Languages in Memory of Frederick Whitehead* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973), 279–301.

[146] Dante, *The Divine Comedy: Purgatorio*, vol. 1, "Italian Text and Translation," ed. and trans. Charles S. Singelton, Canto XXXII, lines 148–160, 360–361: "Sicura, quasi rocca in alto monte, / seder sovresso una puttana sciolta/, m'apparve con le cigilia intorno pronte; / e come perché non li fosse tolta, / vidi di costa e lei dritto un gigante; /

dress, public shame, and sexual misbehavior all in a single female allegorical figure. In this passage, an attack on an overly-mobile woman coexists quite comfortably with the biblical imagery of the Whore of Babylon. The fact that she represents the quite literal historical wandering of the Papacy underscores this reading of the passage.

Women and Mobility in Prescriptive Literature

Several late medieval authors expressed concerns about women's mobility in order to instruct real women how to avoid the misbehavior. Professional churchmen engaged in such a didactic endeavor in collections of *exempla*, short moral vignettes intended for use in vernacular sermons; here I will explore examples from the *Alphabetum Narrationum.* As Valerie Edden and Ruth Mazo Karras have noted, exempla were intended for the edification of the laity and as such reflect both lay and clerical views.[147] Courtesy books written by lay authors which taught good behavior and manners to women often used precisely the same short narratives to illustrate their points.[148] Examples of these lay-authored discussions of the dangers of feminine mobility appear in the *Le Ménagier de Paris*, a courtesy book written in 1394 by a Parisian merchant for his young wife, and *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry*, originally written in French in 1372 by a noble of Anjou for his daughters.[149]

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e basciavansi insieme alcuna volta. / Ma perché l'occhio cupido e vagante / a me rivolse, quell feroce drudo / la flagellò dal capo infin la piante; / poi, di sospetto pieno e d'ira crudo, / disciolse il monstro, e trassel per la selva, / tanto che sol di lei mi fece scudo, / a la puttana e a la nova belva."

[147] Valerie J. Edden, "Devils, Sermon Stories, and the Problem of Popular Belief in the Middle Ages," *Yearbook of English Studies* 22 (1992), esp. 213–17; and Ruth Mazo Karras, "Gendered Sin and Misogyny in John of Bromyard's 'Summa Predicantium,'" *Traditio* 47 (1992): 233.

[148] J. L. Grigsby, "A New Source of the *Livre du Chevalier de la Tour Landry*," *Romania* 84 (1963): 172; Janet M. Ferrier, "*Seulment pour vous endoctriner*: The Author's Use of *Exempla* in *Le Ménagier de Paris*," *Medium Aevum* 48, no. 1 (1979): 77–89; and Doris Ruhe, "'Pour raconte ou pour dottrine': l'*exemplum* et ses limites," in *Les exempla médiévaux: nouvelles perspectives*, ed. Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1998), 331–351. For a broader discussion of the diffusion of Latin *exempla* into vernacular work, see Jacques Monfrin, "L'*exemplum* médiéval, du Latin aux langues vulgaires: techniques de tradition et de diffusion," in *Les exempla médiévaux: nouvelles perspectives*, ed. Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1998), 243–65.

[149] See Anne Marie de Gendt, "'Home-Made' Courtesy Books in Medieval France," in *Centers of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, ed. Jan

Christine de Pizan spoke in quite different terms about the same issues in her *Livre des trois vertus*, a courtesy book written in French in 1405, in dialogue with these two male-authored works.[150]

It is unsurprising that we should find similar concerns in late medieval satire and prescriptive literature, as the members of the literate elite who wrote them were not so specialized in their work as to be unaware of other genres. Christine de Pizan is well known not only for her courtesy book, but for her vehement critical response to *Roman de la rose*; indeed, Rosalind Brown-Grant has suggested that the advice she offers in the *Livre des trois vertus* on how and why to avoid adultery "implicitly rewrites the *Rose*."[151] A long critical tradition also links her work with the work of Boccaccio.[152] Meanwhile, clerical authors may have attempted to respond to Chaucer's Wife of Bath by rewriting some passages in later redactions of the *Tales* to make her appear less ambiguous and more morally reprehensible.[153] Chaucer's work, in turn, borrows extensively from sermon literature and *exempla.* The story of patient Griselda, for example, appears in both *The Canterbury Tales* and among the *exempla* collected by the Ménagier for his bride.[154] Further, as we have seen, significant portions of the Wife of Bath's *Prologue* were a direct borrowing from Theophrastus, possibly transmitted through its many appearances in sermon literature, which the Wife repeatedly

William Drijvers and Alasdair A. MacDonald (New York: E. J. Brill, 1995), 279–288, for a discussion of the *Livre du Chevalier* in relation to other French didactic manuals.

[150] Rosalind Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women: Reading Beyond Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 187–190; Krueger, "'Nouvelles Choses,'" 51–2.

[151] Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women*, 207. See also the summary of the *querelle* in David E. Hult, "The *Rose,* Christine de Pizan, and the *querelle des femmes*," in Dinshaw and Wallace, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*, 195–194.

[152] Anna Slerka, "Le *Livre de la Cité des Dames* de Christine de Pizan, le *Décaméron,* et un guirlande de pervenches," in *Pour acquerir honneur et pris: Mélanges de moyen français offerts à Giuseppe Di Stefano,* ed. Maria Colombo Timelli and Claudio Galdarisi (Montreal: CERES, 2004), 491–500.

[153] Beverly Kennedy, "The Rewriting of the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* in Cambridge Dd.4.24," in *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture, Authority, and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400–1602,* ed. Thomas A. Prendergast and Barbara Kline (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1999), 203–233.

[154] On interconnections between Chaucer, the *Rose*, and Christine de Pizan, see Martha W. Driver, "Romancing the *Rose:* The Readings of Chaucer and Christine," in Cooney, ed., *Writings on Love in the English Middle Ages*, 147–162*;* on common sources in Chaucer and the Ménagier, see Rose, "What Every Goodwoman Wants," 406.

quotes.[155] Dunbar, too, borrowed from sermon literature.[156] Overall, then, it seems clear that the authors under consideration here were aware of some, if not all, of the other texts being considered, and hence shared in the creation, discussion, and dissemination of the trope of the female wanderer. But unlike satire, prescriptive literature presented a more nuanced view of the relationship between pilgrimage and other sorts of travel. The goal of such works was not only to curb bad behavior, but also to encourage good behavior, and at least on the face of it, participation in Christian devotion *was* good behavior. Nonetheless, both courtesy books and exempla warned of the possibility that pilgrimage could be misused. The reappearance of these themes in prescriptive literature strongly suggests that satirical attacks on the pilgrimages of women were socially relevant, and thus that Alison of Bath was not 'just a joke.'

The Alphabet of Tales

Exempla were a popular literary genre; some 46 collections were compiled in the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries.[157] Exempla were drawn from classical sources, the Bible, the lives of the saints, chronicles, historical events, and even current events.[158] I will explore examples from *An Alphabet of Tales*, the English version of the Latin *Alphabetum narrationum* (1307) often ascribed to Arnold of Liège. This text was

[155] For a comparison of Theophrastus and the Wife's *Prologue*, see Hanna and Lawler, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," in *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, 352–53 and 356–61. A brief summary of the Wife's sermon quotation is offered by Lindley, "'Vanysshed was this Daunce,'" 5. See also Andrew Galloway, "Marriage Sermons, Polemical Sermons, and *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*: A Generic Excursus," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 14 (1992): 14, and Ralph Hanna III, "*Compilatio* and the Wife of Bath: Latin backgrounds, Ricardian texts," in *Latin and Vernacular: Studies in Late Medieval Texts and Manuscripts*, ed. A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989), 1–11. For information on Chaucer's use of sermons, see also Margaret Jennings, "The 'Sermons' Of English Romance," *Florilegium* 13 (1994): 127–132, and Claire W. Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures: Preaching, Performance, and Gender in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 2004), Ch. 7, 143–167.

[156] Bitterling, "*The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*: Some Comments," 338.

[157] Jean-Claude Schmitt, "Recueils Franciscains d'*exempla* et perfectionnement des techniques intellectuelles du xiii^{e} au xv^{e} siècle," *Bibliothéque de l'école des chartes* 135 (1977): 7.

[158] Frederic C. Tubach, "Exempla in the Decline," *Traditio* 18 (1962): 409; and Brian S. Lee, "'This is No Fable': Historical Residues in Two Medieval Exempla," *Speculum* 56, no. 4 (1981): 748–760.

widely disseminated and was translated into French and Catalan, as well as English.[159] While the English translator remains anonymous, his translation from Latin contains few errors.[160] This compendium contains several exempla describing the potential dangers of feminine mobility, couched in roughly the same terms in this sermon literature as they were in satire. Ruth Mazo Karras has performed a similar exploration of John of Bromyard's *Summa Praedicantium*, a fourteenth-century English collection, and her conclusions provide further illumination.[161]

It seems as if the author of this collection originally included an exemplum which was a complaint about wandering wives. In the cross-references under the heading of "women," the translator of the *Alphabet of Tales* included the following: "A woman ought to be quiet and not wander. Below, *wife*."[162] None of the tales under the heading of "wives" focused primarily on the sin of wandering, but it is possible that some of the stories were accidentally or purposefully left out when the collection was translated into English.[163] However, women's mobility was also a feature of exempla whose central concern was about sins other than wandering; seven of the fifty-two stories about women featured sins committed as a *result* of the women's wandering.[164] In one relatively tame story, for example, innocent maidens who were "going by the way" aroused the visual interest of a monk, who was reproved by the old wife who accompanied them: "If you were a perfect monk you should not have beheld us, or known that we were women."[165] Another recounted the famous legend of Pope Joan, starting with her wandering: "once there was a young damsel, and a love of hers *went away with her* and brought her in man's clothing unto Rome…" (emphasis

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[159] See Colette Ribaucourt, "Alphabet of Tales," in *Les Exempla médiévaux: introduction à la recherche*, ed. Jacques Berlioz and Marie Anne Polode Beaulieu (Carcasonne: Garae/Hesiode, 1992), 199. For the Catalan version, see Arnau de Lieja, *Recull D'Exemples I Miracles Ordenat Per Alfabet* Vols. I and II (Barcelona: Editorial Barcino, 2004).

[160] Gregg, "'Jacob's Well,'" 360.

[161] Karras, "Gendered Sin and Misogyny in John of Bromyard's 'Summa Predicantium'," *Traditio* 47 (1992): 233–257.

[162] Arnold of Liège, *Alphabet*, ed. Banks, 358: "Mulier debet esse quieta et non vaga. Infra de vxore."

[163] Colette Ribaucourt's edition of the Latin *Alphabetum Narrationum* is, at the time of this publication, forthcoming with Brepols. It is my hope that it will help to solve the mystery of this missing exemplum.

[164] Arnold of Liège, *Alphabet*, ed. Banks, tale 67,49–51; tale 454, 308–9; tale 534, 359; tale 538, 362–3; tale 539, 363–4; tale 650, 401–2; and tale 798, 529–30.

[165] Arnold of Liège, *Alphabet*, ed. Banks, 359: "'And þou wer a parfite monke þou sulde not behalde vs, nor know þat we wer wommen."

mine). The outcome of this travel and transvestism was Joan's elevation to Papacy, and the public revelation of her gender-inappropriate behavior when she gave birth to an illegitimate child during a solemn papal procession, and then died.[166] The author also provided starkly opposite examples of virtue in three *exempla* about women who adopted anchoritic immobility.[167] One of them, afraid that her beauty would lead men into lust, closed herself in a grave and received food only through a little hole, a feat the author clearly felt proved the woman to be especially holy.[168]

Like satire, the *Alphabet of Tales* also dealt with the sins of lust and of pride, occasionally reiterating the threads of interconnection that tied these behaviors together in secular literature. One story, for example, raised the alarm about women's pride in clothing. The *exemplum* tells of a woman who appeared at the church door one Sunday in a long train, upon which the cleric could see demons cavorting; the cleric, through prayer, made the fiends visible to the congregation and the woman herself. The woman repented, and never wore a train again; "and both unto her and all others who saw this vision it was an occasion of meekness, and that they should never after wear proud clothing."[169] While the focus of the story was on her pride, it also returns to the idea that public display is essential to that sin, and that such a display could take place at a religious ceremony. However, lust was the single aspect of the trope of the wandering woman which received the most attention in exempla. About two-thirds of stories about women in the *Alphabetum* (thirty-five of fifty-two) included lust as one of their central elements. Karras has noted that the *Summa Praedicantium* also overwhelmingly related women to the sin of lust; in fact, in that collection "women are nearly five times as likely to be presented as lustful as men."[170] Some of these women, like those who populate satire, were compelled by lust to roam about outside of

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[166] Arnold of Liège, *Alphabet*, ed. Banks, 401–2: "We rede in 'Chronicles' how som tyme þer was a yong damysell, and a luff of hurs went away with hur & broght hur in mans clothyng vnto Rome…"

[167] Arnold of Liège, *Alphabet*, ed. Banks, tale 16, 14–15; tale 136, 95; and tale 329, 228.

[168] Arnold of Liège, *Alphabet*, ed. Banks, 14–15.

[169] Arnold of Liège, *Alphabet*, ed. Banks, 395: "And bathe vnto hur and all oþer at say þis vision it was ane occasion of mekenes, & at þai soulde neuer after vse prowde clothyng."

[170] Karras, "Gendered Sin," 244.

their assigned enclosures. One noblewoman, for example, alone in a castle and possessed by lust, went down from her chamber (the space appropriate to her) and asked the porter (the man who guarded the entryway into that protected space) if he would come sleep with her. His vehement rejection prompted her to dunk herself in the cold water of the river below the castle, which cured her lust, and then to thank him for his good counsel.[171]

While the stories, alphabetized according to the particular vices they illustrated, lend themselves to a separation of the cluster of associations under discussion here, it seems those concerns could not be fully disentangled. The larger web of misbehaviors was instead so closely interwoven that even here, a woman who indulged in one of the negative traits of the wandering woman might automatically evoke more of them. It should not be forgotten that Theophrastus' rant, with its laundry-list of misogynist complaints which tumble out one after the other, with minimal connection or logic, was one of the texts included in this collection. In another story, a nobleman of Rome was presented as an example of wisdom because he would not allow his wife to dress in fine clothing, "to the intent that she should not be suspect or brought to blame."[172] The interdict was against a prideful impulse, but the 'suspicion and blame' so feared by the husband was the result of a further assumption: that she had obtained the clothes either by lust or for lustful purposes, and that her social status might suffer if that was what people *thought* the purpose of her finery to be.

The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry

This conduct handbook, written in 1372 by Geoffroy VI de la Tour Landry, a minor noble from Anjou, was intended to teach his daughters appropriate behavior when they left home to visit the royal court.[173] Like much conduct literature, it reproduced a number of sermon *exempla*, and indeed Geoffroy had help from clerics in gathering sources for the

[171] Arnold of Liège, *Alphabet*, ed. Banks, 501.

[172] Arnold of Liège, *Alphabet*, ed. Banks, 529: "& here-for he wolde not lat hur be gaylie cled; to þe entent at sho sulde not be suspecte nor broght in blame."

[173] On the author's goals, see Anne Marie De Gendt, "Sens et fonction du Prologue dans *Le livre du Chevalier de la Tour Landry*," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 95, no. 2 (1994): 193–206.

work.[174] The book was broadly disseminated and was translated from into both English and German in versions that were faithful to the original French.[175] Like La Vielle, committed to text roughly a century earlier, Geoffroy was addressing an audience of young noblewomen; but unlike her, he taught his daughters how to protect their reputations and virtues, rather than extend their fortunes by collecting generous lovers. As such, he offered advice to his daughters about their behavior in society which, as Hélène Odile Lambert has noted, was flexible, but which nonetheless warned his daughters "against life in society and outings which would expose them to multiple dangers; religious obligations were the principle occasions where the young ladies would have to confront the outside world."[176]

It is in this context of coaching women of the nobility that Geoffroy addressed pilgrimage, which he viewed as a potentially devout act, but one nonetheless fraught with some danger. While he approved of pilgrimage in a general way, he also feared the temptations it could pose for his daughters. His insertion into the text of a sequential pair of *exempla* demonstrated this ambiguous outlook.[177] The first exemplum told the story of a devout woman who heard three Masses a day. While

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[174] Valérie Gontero, "'Cointises et autours': la chevelure dans Le livre du chevalier de la Tour Landry pour l'enseignement de ses filles," in *La chevelure dans la littérature e l'art du Moyen Age: Actes du 28e colloque du Cuer Ma, 20, 21, et 22 février 2003*, ed. Chantal Connochie-Bourgne (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2004), 181–2.

[175] On the pre-Reform German translation, see Hélène Odile Lambert, "L'image de la femme dans le 'Livre du chevalier de la Tour Landry pour l'enseignment de ses filles' (1372) et dans ses transpositions in langue Allemande (1493, 1538)," in *Kultureller Austausch und Literaturgeschichte in Mittelalter / Transferts culturels et histoire littéraire au Moyen Age: Kolloquium im Deutschen Historichen Institut Paris / Colloque tenu à L'institut historique Allemand de Paris 16.-18.3.1995*, ed. Ingrid Kasten, Werner Paravicini, and René Pérennec (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1998), 261. On the medieval English translation, see M. Y. Offard, introduction to *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, trans. William Caxton, ed. Offard, Early English Texts Society Supplementary Series No. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), xvi–xxiii.

[176] Lambert, "L'image de la femme," p. 260: "L'auteur met en guarde ses filles contre la vie en société et les sorties qui les exposent á de multiples dangers; les obligations religieuses sont les principales occasions où les demoiselles doivent affronter le monde extérieur…"

[177] Cynthia Ho, "As Good as Her Word: Women's Language in *the Knight of the Tour d'Landry*," in *The Rusted Hauberk: Feudal Ideals of Order and Their Decline*, ed. Liam O. Purdon and Cindy L. Vitto (Gainesville, Florida: The University Press of Florida, 1994), 106, notes that the author also pairs other exempla to make his point regarding the governance of women's speech.

on pilgrimage, she found herself without a chaplain able to say Mass for her, and because of her long history of devotion, God sent a saint to say the Mass instead.[178] Here, he framed the woman's pilgrimage as perfectly acceptable (if potentially inconvenient), especially considering her track record of religious sincerity. But the very next story told of a young wife who was in love with a squire and wished to spend some time with him. She "made her lord to believe the she had vowed herself to go on pilgrimage; and her lord, who was a good man, allowed her, because he did not want to displease her."[179] Here Geoffroy used the lecherous intent we have seen in other women to throw the pattern of appropriate behavior during pilgrimage into high relief; one is left with the impression that he did not wish to bar his daughters from pilgrimage, but that he did want to see them engage in the practice in a serious-minded and morally acceptable fashion.

A similar attitude informed his suggestions to his daughters about their use of finery, and the problems of lust and pride that their clothing might raise. In this, Geoffroy's advice to his daughters also carried a message of moderation. He did not command them to avoid acquiring finery or wearing it in public, as Jankin did with Alison. Instead, seemingly mindful that their social station called for such displays of wealth and status, he cautioned them not to abandon finery completely, but rather to acquire and display it in the proper context.[180] His book repeatedly attacked excessive finery and outlandish or foreign fashion, often emphasizing the number of poor people who might have been clothed for the cost of a single expensive garment. However, while he argued that too much finery was a bad thing, Geoffroy also asserted that it had proper uses. He included a tale about a woman who had fine clothes, but only wore them "if she was supposed to be at some feast or (when) she thought to find some lords or great strangers," and thus would not wear them to Mass. Her refusal to wear her best clothing to church in order to honor God, rather than man, led to a divine

[178] Geoffroy de La Tour Landry, *Le Livre du Chevalier de la Tour Landry pour l'enseignement de ses filles*, ed. M. Anatole de Montaiglon (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1972), 72–3.

[179] La Tour Landry, *Le Livre*, 73: "…elle faisoit accroire à son seigneur qu'elle s'estoit vouée pour aler en pelerinaige, et son seigneur, qui preudhomme estoit, le souffroit, pour ce que il ne luy vouloit pas desplaire." Translation is the author's own.

[180] For an exploration of all his discussion of clothing, see Kreuger, "'Nouvelles Choses'," 56–7.

punishment of paralysis and swelling.[181] This exempla suggested that, as with pilgrimage, they should simply be mindful about the context of finery's use. This moderate stance is particularly interesting in that it raises the same issues as Jankin and Amis had—that finery would be used by women to gian the attention of men at social gatherings, and that pilgrimage could be misused as an opportunity for sexual assignations—but comes to the conclusion that a religious gathering, approached with sincerity, was nonetheless an appropriate moment for such display. I would suggest that in this Geoffroy was balancing concerns about the woman's own (questionable) goals against the needs of a noble family, whose station required such public displays of wealth.

The Ménagier de Paris

The author of the *Ménagier de Paris*, writing in 1394, offered advice to a somewhat different audience. His book was for his fifteen-year-old bride, and as befitted the needs of a woman of the urban middle class, he instructed her in the areas of household management and cookery, as well as personal conduct and spiritual development.[182] Throughout the book, his tone was gently paternal; he voiced concerns about her inexperience, and offered positive models of behavior for his youthful wife to emulate.[183] These models became very specific when he addressed her mobility within the urban landscape. In a passage that is very nearly an inverse image of Alison and the other wanderers, the author described the behavior he felt would be appropriate in his wife whenever she went out of the house. Primarily, he insisted that she should only go out with proper companions, and that she should "flee suspicious company." Further, he described appropriate physical bearing during such excursions: "as you go, bear your head straight, keep your eyelids lowered and still and look straight before you about four rods ahead and upon the ground, without looking nor turning

[181] La Tour Landry, *Le Livre*, 58–60.

[182] On the bourgeois setting and goals of the work, see Anna Loba, "Le projet du bonheur conjugal dans *Le Mesnagier de Paris*," *Studia Romanica Posnaniensia* 29 (2003), 31–40.

[183] Rose, "What Every Goodwoman Wants," 393–410, does present a compelling argument that there was also a more consistently threatening tone in the Goodman's instruction. For my purposes here, however, the fact that the Goodman presents a positive standard, rather than a negative, satiric one, is of importance.

your gaze upon any man or woman to right or left, nor looking up, nor glancing from place to place, nor laughing, nor stopping to speak to anyone in the road."[184] Such conduct would presumably have kept her from meandering away from the task that had brought her out of the house in the first place, and guard her from the problems of pride, lust, and greed so commonly associated with women who did roam without supervision. Indeed, this sketch of a properly-supervised wife who avoids unnecessary social interactions is nearly as far from the busy and talkative Alison as it is possible to get. The Ménagier did not, however, make his wife's display of clothing a central issue, as other authors had. Unlike Geoffroy, whose daughters would travel away from him, the Ménagier may have anticipated having fairly direct control over the clothing his wife would own and wear both at home and in public.[185]

Despite this direct supervision, the Ménagier worried just as his noble counterpart had about the social dangers inherent in a woman's public religious observance. His advice as to comportment during trips "to town or to church" covered not only his young wife's behavior in the streets, but also her behavior once she reached a church. He advised that once she entered the building, she ought to choose an out-of-the-way place and worship there "without moving hither and thither, nor going to and fro;" she should also look "continually on [her] book or on the face of the image, without looking at man or woman."[186] This all-purpose phrasing and advice could as easily apply to a woman who visited a church in order to hear a Mass as one who did so in order to visit the shrine of a saint.

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[184] Eileen Power, ed. and trans., *The Goodman of Paris*: *A Treatise on Moral and Domestic Economy by a Citizen of Paris* (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1928), 52; also, Georgine E. Brereton and Janet M. Ferrier, eds., *Le Menagier de Paris* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1981), 11: "…et fuyez comaignie suspecionneuse; ….Et en alant ayant la teste droite, les paupieres droites basses et arrestees, et la veue droit devant vous quatre toises et bas a terre, sans regarder ou espandre vostre regard a homme ou femme qui soit a destre ou a senestre, ne regarder hault, ne vostre regard changier en divers lieux muablement, ne rire ne arrester a parler a aucun sur les rues."

[185] Kreuger, "'Nouvelles Choses'," 63, also notes this lack, suggesting that the wife's presumed stasis within the household made clothing less of an issue for her husband.

[186] *The Goodman of Paris*, 52; also, *Le Menagier de Paris*, 11: "Et se vous estes venue a l'eglise, eslisez un lieu secret et solitaire devant un bel autel ou bel ymaige et illec prenez place, et vous y arestez sans changier divers lieux ne aler ça ne la; et aiez la teste droite et les boilevres tousjours mouvans en disans oroisans ou priers. Ayez aussi continuellement vostre regard sur vostre livre ou au visage de l'imaige, sans regarder homme ne femme, peinture ne autre chose, et sans pepelardie ou fiction."

A Woman's View in Proscriptive Literature

Christine de Pizan's interpretation of the female pilgrim stands in contrast to the distinctly masculine fears demonstrated in the other texts examined here. Christine's *Livre des trois vertus* can be classified as courtesy literature, but unlike the narrower works of Geoffroy de la Tour Landry or the Ménagier, she offers advice to women of all social ranks. Throughout the *Livre des trois vertus*, Christine was occupied with teaching women correct behavior that had a specific goal: to protect their honor. But in contrast to male authors, whose goal was to produce women who would not disgrace their husbands or households, Christine sought to help women maintain a good reputation specifically so that they themselves would wield more social clout. Brown-Grant has explained the uniqueness of Christine's text in this way:[187]

> What distinguishes Christine's advice in the *Trois Vertus* from that of her male counterparts in their courtesy books is her emphasis on what might be termed a 'politics of visibility,' a politics designed to protect women but which, paradoxically, would seem to be drawing on a tradition going back to one of the most fervently misogynist Church Fathers. . . . the *Trois Vertus* eschews exemplification in favor of a set of codes of virtuous conduct which must not only be followed, but must be *visibly* followed for all to see. The originality of Christine's text therefore resides in its stress on women's skillful mastery and even manipulation of those codes within which their reputations will be defined.

Thus, according to Christine, if a woman was seen to be virtuous, she would obtain respect, and thus "silence misogynists forever"—an end to which, one could argue, much of Christine's literary career, and especially her participation in the *Rose* quarrel, was dedicated.[188]

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[187] Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women*, 200. See also her shorter article "Christine de Pizan as a Defender of Women," in *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*, ed. Barbara K. Altman and Deborah L. McGrady (New York: Routledge, 2000), 81–100.

[188] Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women*, 214; and Kevin Brownlee, "Discourses of the Self: Christine de Pizan and the *Romance of the Rose*," in *Rethinking the Romance of the Rose: Text, Image, Reception*, ed. Brownlee and Sylvia Hunt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 235–261. See also Driver, "Romancing the *Rose*: The Readings of Chaucer and Christine," in Cooney, ed., *Writings on Love in the English Middle Ages*, esp. 151–158. On the *Rose* quarrel, see the overview of scholarship in Sylvia Huot, "Seduction and Sublimation: Christine de Pizan, Jean de Meun, and Dante," *Romance Notes* 25, no. 3 (1985): 362–363.

To this end, Christine warned women about the potential dangers of travel and of pilgrimage in particular. Her warning against triggering any of the assumptions that attended women's wandering appears amidst her advice entitled "How women of property and city women should be suitably dressed, and how they should protect themselves against those who would deceive them."[189] On its surface, the advice she offered parallels that of the other texts examined above. Christine began with warnings about mobility and public appearances of any kind. Like other authors, she made no particular distinction between the dangers of going on pilgrimage and those caused by attending a secular gathering. After encouraging her audience to avoid bad reputations by eschewing fancy dress and adulterous affairs, she also warned that wise women should avoid questionable company. "Clerics, lords, and other people often arrange gatherings in such places as gardens, using the pretext of entertaining a group of people to conceal some machination or personal love affair.... Before going anywhere, the wise woman will consider with whom, by what means, and who will be where she is going."[190] Christine then moved on to critique pilgrimage with no preamble; she seems to have assumed, as others had, that participation in both secular and religious gatherings harbored potential problems for women.[191]

> Some women travel on pilgrimages away from town in order to frolic and kick up their heels in jolly company. But this is only sin and folly. It is a sin to use God as excuse and shelter for frivolity. Such pilgrimages are entirely without merit. Nor should a young woman go trotting about town, as is the custom—on Monday to St. Avoye; on Tuesday, to who knows where; on Friday to St. Catherine, and elsewhere on the other days. Even if some do it, there is no need for it.

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[189] Christine de Pizan, *A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honor: The Treasury of the City of Ladies*, ed. and trans. Charity Cannon Willard (New Jersey: Bard Hall press and Persea Books, 1989), 189.

[190] Christine de Pizan, *The Treasury of the City of Ladies*, 192.

[191] Christine de Pizan, *The Treasury of the City of Ladies*, ed. and trans. Willard, 192–3; also, *Le Livre des Trois Vertus*, ed. Eric Hicks and Charity Cannon Willard (Paris: Librarie Honoré Champion, 1989), 182: "Ne de trouver ces pelerinages hors ville pour aler quelque part jouer, ou mener la gale en quelque compaignie joyeuse n'est fors pechié et mal a qui le fait: car c'est faire ombre de Dieu et chape a pluie; ne tieulx pelerinages ne soit point bons, ne aussi tant aler trotant par ville a joennes femmes: au lundi a Saincte Avoye, au jeudi je ne sçay ou, au vendredi a Saincte Katherine, et ainsi aux autre jours. Se aucunes le font n'en est ja grant besoing."

Alone among courtesy authors, Christine's critique of female pilgrims began with the assumption that women's sole motivation for pilgrimage is the pursuit of harmless recreation and social interaction, rather than an opportunity to indulge in serious vice. As such, her moral concern was that poorly-performed pilgrimages were being treated by women as if they were fun secular activities such as parties and dances. This was a commonplace complaint of which all pilgrims, both male and female, were suspected; even Chaucer's group was motivated by the prospect of a pleasant stint outdoors in mild spring weather, and this sort of idle curiosity was a common complaint of anti-pilgrimage literature.[192] Christine, however, did not take the further step of classifying all such activities as flimsy pretexts for women to engage in mortal sins such as lust. Instead, she names the frivolity itself as the primary problem, because it is inappropriate to a sacred undertaking, rendering the pilgrimage spiritually needless and 'without merit;' thus, she scolds women for the somewhat less concrete sin of using 'God as a…shelter for frivolity.'

This is not to say, however, that Christine was unwilling to acknowledge the potential for sexual misbehavior on the part of female pilgrims, but even her take on this was more sympathetic that that of the male authors explored above. Unlike our other examples, neither lust, nor pride, nor even greed originally impelled Christine's hypothetical women to wander; and when she did address the question of sexual misbehavior, it came with a generous dash of compassion for the inexperience of young women.[193]

> Of course, we do not wish to prevent anyone from doing good works. But considering a woman's youth and exuberance, plus men's desire to seduce women, as well as the fact that words are so often spoken so readily and so rashly, the surest thing for the soul's profit and the body's honor is to avoid the habit of trotting here and there.

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[192] Chaucer, "General Prologue," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, 23, lines 1–12; see also Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage*, 21, and Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, ch. XIV.

[193] Christine de Pizan, *The Treasury of the City of Ladies*, ed. and trans. Willard, 192–3; also, *Le Livre des Trois Vertus*, ed. Hicks and Willard, 182: "Non pas que nous vueillons empeschier le bien a faire, mais sans faille, veu le peril de joennesce, la legierté et la grant convoitise que hommes ont communement a attraire a femmes, et les paroles qui tost en sont levees et a pou d'achoison, et le plus seur, meismes pour les prouffit des ames et l'onneur du corps, n'estre coustumieres de tant troter ça et la…

Several points about her concern for the sexual continence of female pilgrims stand out. To begin with, Christine named "youth and exuberance" as the primary character flaw in these women, rather than innate lustfulness. While *la legierté* might also be translated as "weakness," "lightness," or even, in a sexual sense, "looseness," taken together with its context it would appear to imply that Christine thought such women suffered primarily from inexperience, rather than a permanently skewed moral compass. She also raised these concerns within an immediate framework that repeatedly insisted that sexual misconduct required *two* participants, and expressed repeated fears of seductive men. Christine insisted not that pilgrimage provided women with an opportunity to hunt, but rather that it left them vulnerable to the predations of others. It is notable that in her earlier depiction of a dangerous party, she presumed that the female audience was not guilty of the "machinations" that could lead to improper behavior; indeed, she attributed such predatory behavior to churchmen and nobles, the very people accusing women of seeking mobility in order to satisfy their sinful desires in the *Fifteen Joys of Marriage* or *The Book of the Knight of La Tour Landry*. When she took up pilgrimage, she reiterated the danger of masculine predation, asserting that it was the combination of the women's inexperience and the *men's* lust that led to problems. At no point in any of the male-authored texts was a woman's agency in an act of lust so thoroughly diminished.

Christine may have further excused the misbehavior of female pilgrims in her comment about 'rash and ready speech.' The church had long labored to bring marriage under its direct purview, and as early as the turn of the eleventh century canonists were attempting to ban clandestine marriages, which were contracted between two people by the exchange of consent, with no witnesses.[194] But consent was so central to the sacramental nature of marriage that clandestine marriages could not be entirely invalidated, and these private agreements had spawned many a court case wherein a private promise and a sex act were brought forth as a claim of marriage. Such cases of disputed marriage continued to clog court systems in the later Middle Ages.[195] If Christine was implying, in voicing fear of rash speech, that her

[194] James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 189.

[195] Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 277 and 501.

hypothetical trotting young women might think that they had verbally enacted a marriage or at least a betrothal before they entered into an ill-advised liason, then she was also implying that they might be excused as gullible fools rather than lustful monsters. Having made this suggestion, she left the question of sexual misbehavior aside and returned to the theological heart of the matter: "God is everywhere to hear the prayers of his devout believers, wherever they happen to be, and He wishes all things done discreetly and not necessarily at will."[196]

As the title of this short section of the *Trois Vertus* suggests, Christine acknowledged the interrelatedness of concerns about women's mobility by bundling the issues of greed and pride into the same section as her advice regarding physical mobility and pilgrimage. She began with concern about the misuse of fine clothing, warning women to avoid extremes of style and expense.[197] Her reasoning on this point was similar to her reasoning about pilgrimage in two ways. First, she insisted that pride in dress was a problem for a long laundry-list of reasons: because sartorial excess was inherently sinful, damaged one's reputation for grace and modesty, was pointlessly expensive, and because it fueled imitation and covetousness (that is, greed). But she placed all of these principal arguments well above any question of pride in dress as a cause of, or a consequence of, sexual misbehavior.[198] Secondly, when she did eventually acknowledge the commonplace connection between proud dress and illicit sex, her explication of that connection began by emphasizing the damage to reputation caused by the *appearance* of impropriety, rather than damage caused by a genuine affair:[199]

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[196] Christine de Pizan, *The Treasury of the City of Ladies*, ed. and trans. Willard, 192–3; also, *Le Livre des Trois Vertus,* ed. Hicks and Willard, 182: "car Dieux est par tout qui exauce les oroisons des devoz deprians, ou qu'ilz soient, et qui veult que toutes choses soient faictes par discrecion et non mie du tout a voulenté."

[197] For an excellent discussion of Christine's take on sartorial matters throughout the work, see Kreuger, "'Nouvelles Choses'," 66 ff.

[198] Christine de Pizan, *The Treasury of the City of Ladies*, ed. and trans. Willard, 189–90; also, *Le Livre des Trois Vertus*, ed. Hicks and Willard, 177–178.

[199] Christine de Pizan, *The Treasury of the City of Ladies*, ed. and trans. Willard, 190; also, *Le Livre des Trois Vertus*, ed. Hicks and Willard, 178–179: "…poson que une femme soit de toute bonne voulenté et sans mauvais fait ne pensee de son corps, si ne le croira pas le monde puis que desordonee en abit on la verra, et seront faiz sur elle mains mauvais jugemens, quelque bonne que elle soit. Si apertient doncques a toute femme qui veult garder bonne renommee que elle soit honneste et sans desguiseure en son abit et abillement, non trop estraincte ne trop grans coléz, ne autres façons malhonnestes,—ne trop grant trouverresse de choses nouvelles, par especial cousteuses et non honnestes."

> Even though a woman may be inspired only by good will and has neither a wicked act nor thought in her body, the world will never believe it if she is indiscreet about her clothes. Thus any woman wishing to preserve her good name should cultivate unpretentiousness in her dress and accoutrements. She should avoid clothes that are too tight, too low-cut, or have other details in bad taste. She should especially avoid styles that are too flashy, too costly, or too suggestive.

In other words, expensive or revealing clothing would indicate to onlookers that a woman was out seeking lovers or had already acquired them, and her appearance of propriety, so dear to Christine's heart, would be sullied thereby.

Ultimately, Christine did tentatively address the possibility that such impropriety would become a reality. But in so doing, she once more laid much of the blame for such behavior at the feet of men who made 'improper advances,' and so she offered advice intended to help women avoid their snares. Her hypothetical overdressed woman was not looking for opportunities to engage in lustful behavior; she "may never have contemplated such an idea but only acted out of her own inclination for her own pleasure," much as her hypothetical young women trotted about to pilgrimage shrines.[200] Christine's advice about how to avoid adultery thus focused not on how to prevent oneself from falling in love or lust, but rather on how to discourage inappropriate sexual advances before they caused serious trouble. Christine never acknowledged that lust might cause a woman to seek an illicit sexual relationship—only that, in her pride, such a woman might enjoy the attention of being wooed, without returning that attention. "They think it fine to say 'I am loved by everyone—a sure sign that I am attractive and have considerable merit.'"[201] In this she echoed the causal relationships implicit in the speech of La Vielle. But whereas Christine insisted that young women 'might never have thought' that public display of finery could earn them sexual attention from men, La Vielle taught them how best to do that very thing.

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[200] Christine de Pizan, *The Treasury of the City of Ladies*, ed. and trans. Willard, 190; also, *Le Livre des Trois Vertus*, ed. Hicks and Willard, 179: "Et elle par aventure n'y pensera, ains le fera seulement pour la plaisance de soy mesmes et par propre condicion qui lui enclinera…"

[201] Christine de Pizan, *The Treasury of the City of Ladies*, ed. and trans. Willard, 191; also, *Le Livre des Trois Vertus*, ed. Hicks and Willard, 180: "…et leur semble belle chose de dire: je suis amee de plusieurs, c'est signe que je suis belle et que il a en moy assez de bien…"

Conclusions

Though a millennium separated Theophrastus' list of complaints about women from Chaucer, Dante, and Christine de Pizan, the series of associations between women's mobility and their purportedly inherent lust, pride, greed, and deceit remained in force. Later medieval authors used that group of associations in a variety of ways. It appeared as humor and as warning, and authors emphasized differing causal connections among the group of related vices, depending upon the geographic location, gender, and class of their audiences. Husbands were advised not to trust their wives' chastity, and noble lovers to beware their sweethearts' greed. Nonetheless, the overall assumptions remained the same: women who enjoyed unbridled mobility would seek out illicit sex, fine clothing, and public display of finery, and they would lie (and aid each other's lies) in order to cover their tracks.

The secondary scholarship on intellectual and literary misogyny in the Middle Ages is vast, and the function of that misogyny within medieval society has also been thoroughly documented; the observations I have made here about literary depictions of women's mobility are very much in accord with that scholarship. It has nonetheless been worthwhile to begin this study of women pilgrims by noting the repetition and uses of the misogynist trope about women who wandered, because its very existence had a distinct effect on real medieval women. As we shall see, women who sought to become pilgrims in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries faced real barriers to their participation which were based not only in the costs of travel or their quotidian responsibilities in the home, but also in the suspicions of vice which clustered around women who took to the road. Even when practical considerations had been ably dealt with and a female pilgrim was already on her way, her travel must also appear to her companions to be socially justifiable, lest she be regarded with hostility. Women who did not manage to thus justify their wandering sometimes became targets for distrust, contempt, abuse, abandonment, or exclusion from entry into shrines. Thus, the literary concerns about women who wandered expressed entrenched cultural assumptions which shaped not only fictional characters and hypothetical advice, but also concrete events and experiences.

CHAPTER THREE

"THE MOTHER PRAYED, THE DAUGHTER FELT RELIEF:" WOMEN AND MIRACULOUS PILGRIMAGE

"Pilgrimage" is a broad term, which, for medieval Christians, embraced a variety of activities. Devotional prayer, short trips to local churches, long journeys to the Holy Land, and the process of human life itself were all understood as types of pilgrimage. In this chapter I will discuss women's presence in the practice I call *miraculous pilgrimage*, a journey undertaken to one of the ubiquitous shrines that boasted either a saint's tomb or some of his or her relics. Such pilgrimages were performed either in the hope that this saint would intercede with God, who would then grant the pilgrim's request for a miracle, or in thanksgiving for a miracle which was believed already to have occurred. In over 90% of cases, pilgrims visited saints' shrines in hopes of healing a sick or injured person,[1] although the shrines of the saints were also associated with miracles such as the raising of the dead, the freeing of prisoners, and the salvation of the shipwrecked.

The suspicion of women's pilgrimages expressed in the texts investigated in the previous chapter did not prevent women from seeking out the shrines of miracle-working saints. Many women contextualized their participation in this sort of pilgrimage as an extension of, rather than a rebellion against, their normative social roles. One unnamed woman, for example, was taking a bath with her nephew when he slipped beneath the level of the water in the bathtub and drowned. She pulled him from the water and vowed a pilgrimage to St. Agnes of Montepulciano, whereupon the boy miraculously began to breathe again, none the worse for his misadventure. Both the woman and her sister, the boy's mother, went on a pilgrimage to Agnes' shrine in thanksgiving for the boy's recovery.[2] Here, a normative feminine role—that of a caregiver to an infant—translated into a pilgrimage vow whose happy outcome

[1] Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1977), 59.

[2] "De S. Agnete," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 810.

led her community to celebrate the woman's travel, rather than suspect her of vice. In making their pilgrimage, the two women collaborated in the creation of a positive image of themselves and their actions, one in which women's pilgrimages could be portrayed as something more than potential problems or tolerable aberrations. Instead, they could be presented as praiseworthy examples of God's grace at work.

The Sources

This chapter examines women's involvement in miraculous pilgrimage as it is recorded in miracle stories collected at the shrines of miracle-working saints. These records have a history as long as Christianity itself. The Christian practice of compiling collections of miracles began with the Gospels' records of the miracles performed by Jesus. His miracles assuaged human concerns such as the restoration of the sick, possessed, or dead, or the manipulation of the weather and food supplies for human benefit.[3] Miracles were later associated with the Christian saints, as those who recorded their stories emphasized their attempts to follow Christ's example (the *imitatio Christi*).[4] The earliest saints, the martyrs, did not necessarily need to perform miracles as Jesus had in order to be considered saints; instead, their martyrdom was considered an imitation of Christ's passion, and it proved their sanctity.[5] But when Christianity became legal in the Roman Empire in 313 C.E. and martyrdoms ceased, other sorts of evidence were required. Texts as early as the lives of the desert fathers written in the fourth century C.E. began to offer proof of sanctity through the incorporation of miracles performed by the saint.[6] These miraculous powers were believed to

[3] Healings: Luke 5:12–16, Luke 5:17–26, Luke 7:1–10, Luke 7:11–17, Luke 8:40–56, Luke 14:1–6, and Luke 17:11–19. Resurrection of Lazarus: John 11:1–44. Exorcisms: Luke 8:26–38, Luke 9:37–43, and Luke 13:10–12. Calming of the weather: Luke 8:22–25. Provision of food: Luke 9:10–17, and John 2:1–12.

[4] For a description of the *Imitatio Christi* in the Christian tradition up through the later Middle Ages, see Giles Constable, "The Ideal of the Imitation of Christ," in *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 143–248. See also Peter Brown, "Enjoying the Saints in Late Antiquity," *Early Medieval Europe* 9:1 (2000): 1–24.

[5] Aviad M. Kleinberg, "Proving Sanctity: Selection and Authentication of Saints in the Later Middle Ages," *Viator* 20 (1989): 185.

[6] Kleinberg, "Proving Sanctity," 186.

remain available to Christians after the saints' deaths. According to Peter Brown, one of the reasons that late antique society understood the saints to be special was "because they made available to the faithful around their tombs on earth a measure of the power and mercy in which they might have taken their rest in the Above."[7] Because of this link with Heaven, the tombs of saints shed the usual association with death, and instead became shrines where life-affirming miracles occurred through the power of the saint.[8] Generally, miracles performed at these tombs were recorded for a period of time after the death of the saint or the translation of his or her relics, in order to glorify the saint and the shrine, and promote pilgrimage locally.[9]

Benedicta Ward argued that by the early thirteenth century, records of miraculous experiences were changing, in that "reshaping by writers with some literary pretensions influenced the material itself."[10] This more literary approach to miracle collections corresponds with a shift in the intended purpose of the stories. Beginning with the papacy of Eugenius III (1145–1153), the pope took control over the process of canonization out of the hands of church councils, and instead made it a "judicial inquisitorial procedure:"[11]

> The role of the hierarchy about a hundred years earlier had been to approve an inspired and rarely disputed popular institution and to see that the saints were properly honored. The thirteenth-century papacy understood its role mainly in negative terms. It examined claims that were assumed to be highly suspicious and it tended not to be generous in its approvals. Hostiensis, for example, saw the process as a deliberate introduction of obstacles to causes to make sure that only the best would survive…

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[7] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 3.

[8] Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, includes a more in-depth and theoretical exploration of these issues; for a discussion on early Christian thought regarding miracles at the graves of saints, see 77–79.

[9] Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record, and Event, 1000–1215* (London: Scholar Press, 1982), 34.

[10] Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, 67. Emma Cownie, "The Cult of St. Edmund in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: The Language and Communication of a Medieval Saint's Cult," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 99, no. 2 (1998): 182, argues for a similar literary shift in the miracles of St. Edmund. This literary reshaping did not necessarily abandon the facts as presented in previous accounts; William D. McCready, "Leo of Ostia, the Montecassino, Chronicle, and the *Dialogues* of Abbot Desiderious" *Mediaeval Studies* 62 (2000): 125–60 argues for continuity in an eleventh-century revision of the miracles of St. Benedict.

[11] Kleinberg, "Proving Sanctity," 188–190; quoted from 189–190.

Brenda Bolton has argued that a similar desire to limit approval of hagiographic miracles animated Innocent III, who felt that they "risked deluding the faithful."[12] From the early thirteenth century onward, then, miracles were not only used to promote a cult locally, but also to win it the approval of a doubtful Curia, and were often recorded with as much literary pomp as possible, in order that they might stand out from the competition. At the same time, the papal commissions that investigated canonization cases were also rigorous in testing miracles, seeking to eliminate the possibility of natural explanations and checking to be sure the testimony of all witnesses was cohesive before affirming that a miracle had in fact occurred.[13] So miracle stories needed both to be eye-catching, and to contain as much agreed-upon, persuasive detail as possible.

By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, fewer miracle collections were being produced in Latin Europe because, as Finucane pointed out, "attempted canonizations had grown more and more expensive, the process had become more complicated, definitions and proofs of miracles more technical."[14] These technicalities were the same ones employed by the papal inquisitions into heresy, where close scrutiny and extensive questioning of witnesses were the norm.[15] André Vauchez has also observed that by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries these expensive canonization proceedings were most likely to be successful in the cases of "those closest to the Curia or with the greatest influence."[16] Indeed, the number of canonizations confirmed by the Curia dropped sharply after 1268.[17] To take one regional example, only three people were successfully canonized in England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Thomas of Hereford, John of Bridlington, and Osmund of Salisbury), and only ten other candidates were proposed.[18] Furthermore,

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[12] Brenda Bolton, "Signs, Wonders, Miracles: Supporting the Faith in Medieval Rome," *Studies in Church History* 41 (2005): 164.

[13] Kleinberg, "Proving Sanctity," 201–203. For an in-depth examination of the rigor of canonization investigations, see Jussi Hanska, "The hanging of William Cragh: anatomy of a miracle," *Journal of Medieval History* 27 (2001): 121–138.

[14] Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, 197.

[15] Michael Goodich, "*Mirabilis Deus in Sanctis Suis*: Social History and Medieval Miracles," in *Signs, Wonders, Miracles: Representations of Divine Power in the Life of the Church*, ed. Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), 135–156, esp. 136.

[16] André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 82.

[17] Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 62.

[18] Eric Waldram Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), 116–117.

the expense of official canonization was not necessary for the success of a local shrine, and in the face of financial obstacles, the veneration of *beati*, those who were not formally canonized, became more widespread in this period.[19] Shifts in devotional culture also contributed to this state of affairs. Lay devotion in many areas no longer focused so entirely on the cults of saints, which were increasingly competing with shrines housing relics of Christ or relics of the Virgin.[20] Hence, in the later Middle Ages, miracle collections were compiled to meet the exacting standards of an expensive and difficult process, making them both more informative and less common.

The pressure to meet these standards shaped later medieval miracle collections. Some miracles were written in a concise, formulaic fashion, as if the scribe were taking a legal deposition that could withstand close scrutiny because it presented only the bare and most pertinent facts. Of the miracles that will be examined here, those of Agnes of Montepulciano are some of the briefest: "A certain Mancaccia, having been mute for eighteen months, coming with great faith to Montepulciano to visit the relics of the blessed Agnes, was at once granted the favor of prompt speech, which she also made public by making a notarized document."[21] As in this example, even the least detailed of miracle collections almost always provided such concrete factual information as the names of those who were healed, their place of residence, and sometimes the names of other witnesses to the miracle.[22]

But often the stories were far more detailed, especially in cases where the cult was large and had a strong financial backing. Lengthier stories offered detailed descriptions of the illness that was healed or the evolution of the situation that required miraculous intervention, seeking to prove that *only* a miracle could satisfactorily have resolved the problem. This high level of descriptive detail might be found the miracles recorded at the shrine, and also in those taken down as legal depositions

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[19] Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 90.

[20] Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, 195–202.

[21] "De S. Agnete," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 813: "Mancaccia quaedam, decimum octavum mensem muta, magna cum fide veniens in Montem-Politianum ad visitandum corpus B. Agnetis, gratiam promptae loquelae subito impetravit, idque confecto instrumento publicam etiam fecit."

[22] Here I must disagree with Michael Goodich's assertion that the stories are "often almost devoid of specific reliable data, including the elementary 'who, what, when, and where' of any historical document." On the contrary, in the seven collections I have studied, the minority of miracles lacked references to names, places, and dates. Goodich, *Violence and Miracle in the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), ix.

in the judicial investigations that produced canonization dossiers. Take, for example, the case of Katherine, the wife of Matthew Teschener, who appealed for aid after having overlaid her infant.

> (She) had a six-month-old boy, and in the evening she put him, healthy, in his cradle. At about daybreak she took that boy into bed with her. She, sleeping, rested up until dawn; having awakened, she discovered the boy with her was suffocated and dead; and she was able to see no sign of life in him, as he had become cold. And wanting to see him better, she lit a lamp and carefully inspected the boy, in whom all the signs of death she saw very clearly. And she, terribly anxious, not presuming to announce her vehement sadness to her husband, kneeling most devoutly made a vow to visit the shrine of Dorthea von Montau…[23]

Dorthea, of course, restored the infant to life. The lengthy explanation of Katherine's desperate situation had a literary quality in its heart-string-tugging descriptions of both the event and the woman's emotional response. Nevertheless, it also met the legal needs of the canonization process: the child was proven to be dead not by a witness (the author excused this lack with his mention that the mother was afraid to tell her husband about her blunder) but by a heavy emphasis upon the mother's thorough medical assessment of the child.

Attempting to make sense of the experiences of female pilgrims using these miracle stories, however, presents a number of difficulties. The centralmost of these lies in deciding whether to regard them as factual accounts. Skepticism about the literal truth of miracles has often led scholars to dismiss miracle stories as devout but tiresomely repetitious fictions. Even historians who regard them as factually-based sources have approached them from the standpoint of scientific doubt; Finucane, for example, relied on modern medical knowledge to explain how the people involved in the stories could have believed that they were the subjects of supernatural healing when their recoveries were,

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[23] Richard Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau von 1394 bis 1521* (Vienna: Bohlau Verlag, 1978), 32: "Katherina uxor Matthis Teschener de Grudencz, opido Culmensis diocesis, habens puerum sex mensium, ipsum de vespere sanum ad cunabula posuit. Circa primum gallicantum ipsum puerum ad se in lectum receipt. Qua dormiente requevit usque ad auroram; expergefacta puerum invenit apud se oppressum et mortuum; et nullum vite signum in eo recognoscere poterat, cum frigidus esset. Volensque hoc melius cernere, lumen accendit et diligentius puerum inspexit; in quo omnia signa mortui clarissime cognovit. Que valde anxia, non presumens ita vehemens tristitiam coniugi nuntiare, devotissime geniculando votum fecit sepulchrum beate Dortheee visitare…"

in fact, naturally explicable.[24] Finucane, Sharon Farmer, and Michael Goodich have also explored aspects of medieval society and culture by setting aside the uncomfortable or fictive portion of the story (the miracle itself), engaging instead in close scrutiny of the circumstances that required the supernatural intervention, in search of clues about everyday life in the Middle Ages.[25]

Such treatments have yielded wonderful social history, but at the cost of both oversimplifying and underutilizing these rich sources. Miracle stories are neither wholly fictive nor wholly factual. Nor can any individual portion of the stories safely be excised and labeled as indisputable fact or absolute fiction. This is true precisely because miracle narratives are the product of a collaborative storytelling effort. When any pilgrim claimed to have experienced a miracle and publicly recited the story of that experience, there was at *least* one intermediary, usually a clergyman, who recorded her story in a collection of similar stories. Sometimes there was a second intermediary who compiled, edited or translated the original version. At other times, the story was recorded in a legal deposition given before a papal commission by one or more witnesses, whose testimony sometimes disagreed in the details.[26] In almost all cases, these intermediaries were not only translating speech into text, but also translating vernacular into Latin. The structure and content of the written miracles make it clear that these intermediaries used the stories "as propaganda for the establishment and continued veneration of a saint in a particular place."[27] For example, miracle tales often depict suppliants as wandering from shrine to shrine, finding no

[24] Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, Ch. 4, 59–82. A similar stance is adopted by Stankop Andrić in *The Miracles of St. John Capistran* (Budapest: Central European Press, 2000), 355–59.

[25] See Finucane, *The Rescue of the Innocents: Endangered Children in Medieval Miracles* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Sharon Farmer, "Down and Out and Female in Thirteenth-Century Paris," *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 2 (1998): 345–372; and Goodich, *Violence and Miracle in the Fourteenth Century*, especially Ch. 1; also, Goodich, "Microhistory and the inquisitions into the life and miracles of Philip of Bourges and Thomas of Hereford," in *Medieval Narrative Sources: A Gateway into the Medieval Mind*, ed. Werner Verbenke, Ludo Mils, and Jean Goosens (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 91–106.

[26] On the complexities of cases with the testimony of multiple witnesses, see Robert Bartlett, *The Hanged Man: A Story of Miracle, Memory, and Colonialism in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); and Ronald C. Finucane, "The Toddler in the Ditch: A Case of Parental Neglect?" in *Voices from the Bench: The Narratives of Lesser Folk in Medieval Trials*, ed. Michael Goodich (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2006), 127–148.

[27] Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, 126.

relief until they arrive at the one the author was promoting. The intermediaries could have a significant effect on the plots of the stories, as well. The miracles of St. Simone da Todi, for example, were written in seven chapters by at least five authors, who varied the basic structure of the narratives. The author of Chapter 4 almost always wrote that the person seeking the miracle decided to go to the tomb of Simone and was healed there. The author(s) of Chapters 6 and 7, however, almost always explain that the suppliant received a miracle immediately after having made a prayer or a vow to St. Simone, and later went to his tomb for a pilgrimage of thanksgiving. It is possible that both types of story were told by pilgrims to St. Simone, but the clerical scribes either reshaped the stories they were told, or chose only to present the ones that fit their favored pattern. The scribes may have shaped the narratives just as profoundly in single-author collections, but without a basis for comparison it is impossible to know precisely how.

Iona McCleery, in her study of Portuguese hagiography, has pointed out that scribes may have "alter(ed) miracle accounts to lend them the weight of tradition, but their presence does not imply that the people involved did not exist."[28] The influence of the scribe was not absolute, and the collaborative narratives they recorded were not entirely acts of imagination. As we have seen, most miracles described a specific person, place, and crisis. Since canonization proceedings included an investigation of the miracles by papal representatives, these people and events could not profitably have been made up out of whole cloth. The authors, if they were not papal representatives themselves, knew that their narratives must reflect lived events closely enough that the stories would later pass muster. In the miracles of King Henry VI, the marginal notes in the extant manuscript show that even twenty years after the miracles had been recorded at Windsor, an overwhelming percentage of the suppliants whom the papal investigators could find were able to tell and prove their stories well enough, and with the agreement of enough witnesses, for the investigators to declare them "probatum," or proved.[29]

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[28] Iona McCleery, "*Multos ex Medicinae Arte Curaverat, Multos Verbo et Oratione*: Curing in Medieval Portuguese Saints' Lives," *Studies in Church History* 41 (2005): 197.

[29] Paul Grosjean, introduction to *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, ed. Grosjean (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1935), 74*–104*.

Thus, I agree with Michael Goodich that the miracle story was a product of a "discourse in which the miraculé, the hagiographer, and cultic community were engaged."[30] I would propose that this product represents a community's consensus memory of a series of events, a compromise which, as best it could, met the varying needs of belief, individual memory, promotion, and legal scrutiny. This consensus memory was an important one, as it had tremendous implications for the interpenetrated identities of saint and community. Miracle stories were an important method by which the members of a community came to define a saint and their relationship with her.[31] They existed simultaneously in written and oral form. After having created a sensation among those gathered at the shrine, the stories were carried to the areas surrounding a shrine by word-of-mouth.[32] Further, officials at a shrine celebrated miracles with public liturgies and processions, used miracle stories in sermons, told them in connection with the relics they exhibited, and wrote about them in letters.[33] Indeed, Raymond of Capua, the author of the *Life of St. Catherine of Siena*, described how the miracle performed for a certain Niccolo became common fame in a liturgical context:[34]

> On one occasion, when I was preaching the word of God to the people and describing the great things that the Lord had done through His bride, I was telling the story of this miracle when Niccolo himself got up in the middle of the congregation and said in a loud voice, 'Sir, that's the truth! I am the person on whom the virgin did the miracle.'

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[30] Michael Goodich, "Filiation and Form in the Late Medieval Miracle Story," in *Lives and Miracles of the Saints* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), Ch. XVIII, 306. Simon Yarrow articulates a similarly complex interrelationship in his article "Narrative, Audience, and the Negotiation of Community in Twelfth-century English Miracle Collections," *Studies in Church History* 42 (2006): 65–77.

[31] Jennifer M. Lee has noted that the use of pilgrim-badges in the Canterbury cult resembles the use of livery to signify relationship between the wearer and a more powerful figure. Lee, "Searching for Signs: Pilgrims' Identity and Experience Made Visible in the *Miracula Sancti Thomae Cantuariensis*," in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage*, ed. Blick and Tekippe, 488.

[32] Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, 156; see also Pierre-André Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale (XI^e–XII^e siècle)* (Paris: Les éditions du cerf, 1985), 182–188.

[33] Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, 157–9.

[34] Blessed Raymond of Capua, *The Life of St. Catherine of Siena*, ed. and trans. George Lamb (New York: P. J. Kennedy and Sons, 1960), 354.

Since the accounts of miracles, as accepted and interpreted by churchmen, spread so quickly, "they achieved the status of a literary genre whose discursive qualities were institutionalized and whose structure achieved near-codification," an accepted consensus whose very existence shaped the way that later pilgrims told their stories.[35]

Such consensus can be very powerful indeed; according to Margaret Gilbert's influential work on collective beliefs, once a belief has been jointly accepted by a group, "group members are personally obliged not to deny" them.[36] Thus, having heard stories about successful pilgrims, another pilgrim might undertake similar actions, prayers, or vows if she was looking for help with the same situation. Even if a pilgrim's experiences were unusual, he or she might later have reconstructed the memory of those experiences so that they matched the established pattern, and thus seemed more subjectively 'true.' It is even possible that a pilgrim might have censored herself entirely by not telling her tale to the officials at the shrine if she knew it might seem far-fetched or inappropriate when compared to the standing interpretations. Just as one could not consistently untangle the voices of multiple authors, there is no way to consistently separate out such self-reinforcing patterns in the stories from things that 'really happened.'

How, then, can we begin to find the lived experiences of women in these multifaceted documents? Rather than disregarding their complexity, that complexity is the most important aspect to keep in mind. If the trends that appear in them are the product of a cooperative understanding of events, then it is in this consensus that we must take an interest. Miracle stories can definitely tell us something about how a wide variety of people with different agendas understood the way that the relationship between saint and devotee functioned: the expectations each party brought to the table, the mutual obligations the relationship entailed, and the way the relationship was to be ritually enacted. They can also tell us much about the circumstances that prompted devotees to seek the saints' help, and as a result, what circumstances might make that saint seem attractive or approachable. Placing women within this consensus portrait of saint and community tells us about

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[35] Goodich, "Filiation and Form," 307.

[36] See Margaret Gilbert, "Modeling Collective Belief," *Synthese* 73 no. 1 (1987): 193; See also the longer discussion in Gilbert, *On Social Facts* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), Ch. V–VI.

expectations, possibilities, and, somewhat distantly, about the experiences of real people.

One result of this community consensus is that miracle stories can be a repetitious, and occasionally even a monotonous, source material. Generally the authors stayed very close to a preferred format; each story consists of an illness, accident, or emergency, followed by the resolution of that situation by the saint. This repetition is driven by the documents' anticipation of the same purpose, and by the uniform legal scrutiny of the curia bureaucracy, and makes the stories easy to compare to one another. Repetitious source materials call for a statistical examination of their contents, and such an investigation in turn provides a useful interpretive frame through which to examine specific texts in a more qualitative fashion. However, such investigations must proceed with due respect for the limitations of the sources themselves. Despite the fact that they represent diverse regions, saintly figures, and specialties, I do not wish to make the claim that the seven collections and the total of 711 miracle stories examined here represent a social scientist's random sample of a population. That model, the basis of work on modern sources in the social sciences, can rarely, if ever, be achieved in premodern history. Hence, this study will avoid complex statistical operations in favor of taking a simple numerical snapshot of the relevant elements of the stories. Further, while the stories' overall similarity suggests that comparison across collections is not unreasonable, it is also possible to discern variation from one collection to the next. Thus, wherever relevant, statistical trends should be presented both within individual collections and across several of them, in order to show that major trends are not heavily influenced by the content of a single collection. This approach is not dissimilar from the methods of Finucane and Goodich.

With all this in mind, I have examined seven collections of miracle stories that were compiled between 1300 and 1500. They include, in chronological order, the miracles of St. Yves;[37] St. Agnes of Montepulciano;[38]

[37] St. Yves died in 1303; his canonization dossier was compiled in 1330. His miracles can be found in "De s. Yvo Presbytero Trecorii in Britannia Armorica," *Acta Sanctorum* May IV, and also in A. de la Borderie, J. Daniel, R. P. Perquis and D. Tempier, eds., *Monuments Originaux de l'Histoire de Saint Yves* (Saint-Brieuc: Imprimerie L. Prud'Homme, 1887).

[38] Montepulciano is in Tuscany. Agnes died in 1317 and her miracles were written in 1350, with a few appended in 1500. Her miracles can be found in "De S. Agnete Virgine Ord. S. Dominici Monte-Politiani in Hertruria," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II.

St. Simone da Todi;[39] Dauphine;[40] St. Birgitta of Sweden;[41] Dorthea von Montau;[42] and King Henry VI of England.[43] These cults represent a broad sample of the period and the geography covered by this study. Two are Italian, two are French, and one each is from Sweden, England, and Germany. Four are women and three are men. Four were formally canonized, and three were not. The cults venerate figures whose stations in life were as diverse as monarch (Henry), noble (Birgitta and Dauphine), hermit (Simone), abbess (Agnes), and devout lay Christian mother (Dorthea). Where they seem to specialize in a particular type of healing, the specialties of these figures are as diverse as the healing of hernias (Simone), of demonic possession (Birgitta), and of traumatic injury (Henry VI). Despite this diversity, their miracles reveal common patterns of behavior among female pilgrims to the saints, patterns which suggest that these collaborative authors shared a more positive series of assumptions about the pilgrimages of women.

Female Pilgrims, Feminine Roles

Despite suspicion and mistrust expressed by critics of women's mobility, the evidence in the miracle collections suggests that women frequently engaged in pilgrimage to saints' shrines. Further, their collaborative authorship, which encompassed participants both clerical and lay, often applauded such travel. In fact, women appear as pilgrims in miracle stories almost as often as men do. In the 711 miracle stories under

[39] Todi is in Umbria. Simone died in 1322, and his miracles were collected between 1322 and 1325. His miracles can be found in "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II.

[40] Dauphine died in 1360, and her canonization dossier collected her miracles in 1363. Her miracles can be found in the full dossier; see Jacques Campbell, ed., *Enquête pour les process de canonization de Dauphine de Puimichel Comtesse D'Ariano* (Turin: Bottega D'Erasmo, 1978).

[41] Birgitta died in 1373. Her miracles were collected into her canonization dossier in 1374. See Isak Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte* (Stockholm: Uppsala, 1924–1931).

[42] Dorthea died in 1394. Her canonization proceedings collected her miracles in 1421. See Richard Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau von 1394 bis 1521* (Vienna: Bohlau Verlag, 1978).

[43] Henry died in London in 1471, and his miracles were collected between 1471 and 1500. His shrine was moved to Windsor Castle in 1484. See Paul Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1935); some of the miracles were also translated by Ronald Knox and Shane Leslie, *The Miracles of King Henry VI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923).

investigation here, women acting singly or in groups constituted nearly two-fifths of those seeking help from the saints (hereafter referred to as 'suppliants'), nearly the same proportion of the total which was comprised by men acting singly or in groups. (See Appendix, Figure 1).[44] This gender division varied cult-by-cult, with two collections (Henry VI and Birgitta of Sweden) relying more heavily on stories about male suppliants, and two collections (Dorthea von Montau and Simone da Todi) recording the stories of significantly more female than male suppliants (See Figure 2.) These four gender-biased collections do not correspond to a particular region, but the two which favored stories about men were associated with the cults of members of the nobility. On the other hand, of the two that heavily favored women, one seems obviously attractive for female devotees, in that it was the cult of a devout laywoman, but in the other, the cult of a monk from Bologna, the appeal seems far less obvious. It would appear, then, that the culture of women's participation in an individual cult (or the representation of that participation) might have varied based on many factors. But even in the case of Henry's miracles, where women appear in the stories the least, they still comprise one-fifth of suppliants. In the collaborative effort that produced these stories, then, the authors routinely asserted that it was perfectly acceptable for women to undertake pilgrimages in order to seek miracles.

In light of this, the mistrust and mockery of female pilgrims expressed by the lay and clerical authors whose work was explored in Chapter 2 should be contextualized as a response to the real commonplace of women's participation in devotional travel. Perhaps in some measure because of those negative stereotypes, but also because of the demands of their daily lives, women who disregarded these monitions and sought the shrines of the saints tended to be portrayed in miracle stories as acting in ways that were related to normative feminine roles. The circumstances under which they sought miracles, the sorts of healing that they sought, and the ways in which miracle stories presented women's pilgrimages to the shrines of saints were all tightly entwined with the feminized role of the caregiver. Whether the miracle stories' tendency to portray female pilgrimage within the framework of acceptable femininity was a direct reproduction of real women's behavior, a matter

[44] The remaining appeals for help were made by married couples and other mixed-gender groups.

of choosing or revising memories certain to fit within cultural comfort zones, or some combination of the two is indistinguishable. Either way, the collaborative authors of miracle stories created a positive image of the female pilgrim, one that was always blameless for her travel, and was sometimes even worthy of praise.

The logic of this positive image of female pilgrims can be demonstrated by examining the essential outlines of women's roles in the stories. Although the collaborative authors seemed sanguine that any Christian could seek the saints, the circumstances under which men and women did so differed significantly. Women and men were relatively evenly represented overall among those who petitioned these seven saints for help, but when we look at the gender of those upon whom miracles were directly enacted (hereafter referred to as the 'subjects' of miracles), a much greater gender disparity appears. Of those healed, rescued, or otherwise touched directly by miraculous intervention, nearly two-fifths were female but nearly three-fifths were male (See Figure 3).[45] The reason for this disparity is that many of those who sought the saints requested help for someone other than themselves. In only slightly more than half of all the miracles, a suppliant went to the saints to seek help for him- or herself. In the remainder, the suppliant acted as an intercessor, seeking help for another person. In both raw numbers and in proportion to their overall presence, women outstripped men as intercessors. Taking all collections together, more than two-fifths of women, either alone or in groups, sought help for someone else, but only about a quarter of men did the same. (See Figure 4.)[46] In other words, when they sought out the saints, women were far likelier than men to be acting in a caregiving capacity. If we examine individual cults, we find that while the proportion of women who acted as intercessors varies from one-fifth of all women to more than four-fifths of all women, that of men acting as intercessors ranges only from one-fifth to just shy of two-fifths of all men. Meanwhile, the proportion of women who sought help for themselves is less than that of men who sought help for themselves in every collection with the exception of the

[45] These figures include individual women and men as well as groups of a single gender. The rest of the subjects were accounted for by inanimate objects, animals, and cases where the gender of the subject was unclear in the text.

[46] The remaining cases were accounted for by mixed-gender groups, married couples, and cases where the gender was not reported.

miracles of Dorthea of Montau, whose miracles also represented more women than men overall. (See Figure 5.) In individual collections and in the miracles as a whole, then, the authors of miracle stories were more likely to present women as caregivers than men.

This caregiving duty was central to normative feminine roles. Carole Rawcliffe has noted that "women were expected to look after relatives and other dependents as a matter of course," and points out that Margery Kempe was vilified for living separately from her aged, invalid husband and thus failing in her duty to care for him, while the Ménagier of Paris encouraged his young wife to care for sick members of her household.[47] In order to fulfill these duties, women in charge of households needed "to cultivate the skills of an apothecary as well as an herbalist," and possibly those of a surgeon as well.[48] Indeed, this kind of service was so essentially feminine that women—nuns, beguines, and married lay women alike—were even able to extend their caregiving beyond their immediate households, working as professional healers.[49] While much of our knowledge of female healers, midwives, wise women, empirics, and surgeons in the high and later Middle Ages arises from the attempts of university-trained doctors to repress or limit their practice, their very presence as publicly-available healers is a reflection of the importance of this sort of work for women within their households.

Medieval women were expected to care for the health of others, then; it was also expected that males, and especially sons, should receive the lion's share of that caregiving. The miracle stories reproduced this aspect of normative gender roles. Both male and female intercessors were meeting the needs of males more often than those of females. Where intercessors acted on behalf of a person whose gender is reported in the miracle stories, women sought help for other females in a little

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[47] Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society in Later Medieval England* (Somerset: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, 1995) 182–3.

[48] Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society*, 184.

[49] On women as healers in the Middle Ages, see for example Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society*, Ch. 8, passim; Monica Green, "Women's Medical Practice and Care," in Judith M. Bennett et al., eds., *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) 39–78; or Debra L. Stoudt, "Medieval German Women and the Power of Healing," in Lillian R. Furst, ed., *Women Healers and Physicians: Climbing a Long Hill* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1997) 13–42. On the limitation of female practitioners, see Michael Solomon, "Women Healers and the Power to Disease in Late Medieval Spain," in Furst, ed., *Women Healers and Physicians*, 79–92.

over a third of cases, but for males or groups of males in the other two-thirds of cases; male intercessors (who were fewer in number) intervened for others at roughly the same rates by gender.[50] (See Figure 6.) If we look strictly at women seeking help for their own children, this concern for males softens slightly; mothers were willing to intercede for their daughters slightly more often than fathers were. Even so, mothers strongly favored their sons over their daughters. About two-fifths of mothers wanted help for their daughters, and three-fifths wanted help or their sons; meanwhile, less than a quarter of fathers sought help for daughters, and more than three-quarters wanted help for sons. Parents who sought the saint together so strongly favored sons that less than one-tenth of such couples sought help for daughters (see Figure 7). This corroborates Finucane's estimation of children's appearances in English miracles, about which he concluded that "in a profoundly male-dominated society, male children were valued more highly than female offspring."[51] This concern for sons was also noted by Sigal in his work on miracles related to childbirth.[52]

The illnesses, injuries, or other problems that prompted the female suppliants of the miracle collections to seek help from the saints also neatly reflected gender-normative behavior. For example, while the healing of illness was the most common sort of miracle in these collections, women adhered more closely to this standard than men did. About 70% of female subjects received cures for illness, while slightly less than half of male subjects did. Instead, male subjects more frequently needed aid because an accident, rather than an illness, had become a threat to their well-being. Across the collections, 15.5% of male subjects sought to heal an injury, but only 2.6% of female subjects; 13.5% of males were brought back from the dead, but only 7.0% of females; and 10.2% of male subjects were preserved from mortal dangers such as drowning, fire, or hanging, as compared to only 3.7% of female subjects. (See Figure 8.) This gendered pattern in mortal danger is confirmed in other studies. Finucane's study of

[50] The remaining cases were accounted for by females seeking help for inanimate objects, a subject of unknown gender, a group of males, and a mixed-gender group.

[51] Finucane, *Rescue*, 161; Sigal, "La grossesse, l'accouchement et l'attitude envers l'enfant mort-né à la fin du moyen âge d'après les récits de miracles," in *Santé, medecine et assistance au Moyen-âge: 110e Congrès national des Sociétés savants, Montpellier, 1985* (Paris, Editions du C.T.H.S., 1987) 23–41.

[52] Finucane, *Rescue*, 161; Sigal, "La grossesse, l'accouchement et l'attitude envers l'enfant mort-né," 25.

English miracles noted that women more commonly presented with chronic illnesses than men.[53] Barbara Hanawalt's work on coroner's records from later medieval England uncovered a similar trend. She argued that women were not the subjects of accidental death nearly so often as men, because "their general round of daily activities was less physically dangerous than men's…"[54] Here, too, the authors of miracles seem to reflect normative femininity.

The miracles also portrayed women as seeking help for themselves for specific types of illness that were, again, situated well within both social and physiological norms. In cases of bodily (rather than behavioral) illness, women tended to seek help for chronic conditions rather than for sudden ones. Women were strongly represented amongst those seeking help for ongoing problems like blindness, deafness, lameness, paralysis, or pain. Those complaints together account for about half of women who acted for themselves and whose illnesses are clearly identified, but only for about one-third of the corresponding population of males. (See Figure 8.) Both Sigal and Finucane have noted a link in miracle stories between women and complaints of arthritis and paralysis, and Finucane suggested that biological links between female physiology and rheumatoid disorders, birth trauma, and 'hysterical debilities' might be behind the trend.[55] While such a causality would be difficult to prove conclusively, female physiology is definitely the reason why women cornered the market on miraculous cures of problems with parturition, stillbirth, and lactation (some 8.7% of women seeking help for themselves).[56] Altogether, nearly two-thirds of females seeking help for themselves were trying to cure either a gynecological problem or a chronic illness. While we might choose to see a strictly biological explanation for these trends, we should also note that either chronic illness or gynecological problems would seriously have hampered women's ability to render services to their families; women with such problems might have been quite limited in their activities as household managers, caregivers, sexual partners, or child-bearers. It was under these circumstances, then, that the collaborative authors agreed it acceptable for women to travel to seek help for themselves.

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[53] Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, 148.

[54] Barbara Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 145.

[55] Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle*, 304 and 306; Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, 148.

[56] On the other hand, only men (about 2% of those seeking help for themselves) were cured of hernias.

Women also predominated among those healed of conditions we might call mental illness, but whom medieval writers often described as "sine sensu et intellectu," or "out of their senses and thoughts." The *sine sensu* were generally diagnosed as either insane or possessed by demons. Across the seven collections, female subjects appeared in need of healing of such problems at slightly more than double the rate of male subjects (See Figure 8.) While the origins of mental illness in any culture remain unclear—and indeed, modern practitioners hotly debate whether social or biological factors contribute more to the development of such conditions—it is interesting to note that rates of mental illness among both pre-modern and modern women in Britain have also been estimated to be double those of men.[57] Once more, the miracles seem to reflect women that do not surprise us with their needs or their roles.

If women appear in the miracle stories seeking help for themselves under a narrow set of gender-specific circumstances, the situations in which it was acceptable for women to act as intercessors diverged little from the patterns exhibited by their male counterparts. Male and female intercessors appear to differ only in seeking help for the *sine sensu*, which men did twice as often as women (7.5% of women as opposed to 14.5% of men), and the restoration of the dead, which women sought twice as often as men (32.3% of women, vs. 15.9% of men.) Men's preponderance as intercessors for the *sine sensu* makes sense given that women are so often the subjects of these miracles. In many such cases, a husband brought his wife to a shrine to have her demons cast out or her madness cured. On the other hand, the dominance of women pilgrims as intercessors for the dead is another reprisal of their role as caregivers. Of 34 women who sought resurrection for the dead, 28—more than four-fifths—were mothers, and another two were aunts. Hence, mothers who were caring for their ill and dying children were there, on the spot, to ask for divine intervention when their more mundane ministrations failed. But in all other circumstances, male and female intercessors sought help in similar numbers, suggesting that female intercessors were not limited by their gender in the kinds of help they requested. Instead, the act of intercession itself appeared to be the normatively feminine role they adopted.

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[57] Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-century England*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 37–40. Please see further discussion of the topic of behavioral aberrance and pilgrimage in chapter 5.

How, then, can we assess women's roles in the basic structures of miracle stories? To recapitulate, women were present in the practice of miraculous pilgrimage, but their appearance as pilgrims grew out of their normative roles. Men approached the saints for a variety of miracles, but in most cases the help they sought was for themselves. Half of women went looking for help for themselves, but they sought help in most cases for chronic illnesses of a sort that were related to their female biology and their daily situations, and which would interfere with their quotidian duties. Thus, they could present their situations as normative, outside of their control, and a problem for others, as well as for themselves. Meanwhile, when they acted as intercessors, it was acceptable to represent women as seeking help for a broad variety of issues. Indeed, they were the most common intercessors when a saint was asked to resuscitate the dead, perhaps as a natural outgrowth of their responsibility to nurse the sick. Similarly, another third of women were mothers acting for the benefit of their children—another important, visible part of their day-to-day responsibilities. This snapshot suggests that women, despite the resistance to their 'wandering,' were able to seek shrines and to request miracles and to publicize their experiences and their pilgrimages, so long as their needs and actions were understood to fit into their roles within the household as much as possible. This emphasis on normative femininity could have stemmed from real behaviors, a process that selected for acceptable behaviors, and a retroactive desire for acceptability, all at the same time.

Proof of Legitimacy

No matter how we frame the question of authorial control, the outline of women's appearances in miracle stories, one which emphasized normative roles in caregiving or the chronic illness women were somewhat more likely to experience than men, is not especially startling. Of greater interest, however, are the ways in which the collaborative authors colored in those outlines. Women's pilgrimages were indeed normative both in the sense that they really happened, and also in the sense that they often reflected women's daily roles; nevertheless, it was important to the writers of these tales that their intended audiences have no cause to doubt the motivations and actions of the stories' heroines, lest their polemic fail through an unintentional referral to the unsympathetic figures of satire. The appearance of propriety may have been equally important

to individual women who undertook miraculous pilgrimages in the face of a culture that could be very skeptical of their public forays. Hence, the collaborative authors took pains to highlight women's justifications for their pilgrimages in a variety ways. At times these justifications moved beyond an attempt to evoke mere tolerance, creating instead an actively praiseworthy model of the female pilgrim.

Given the boundaries of day-to-day life for medieval women, perhaps the most difficult miraculous pilgrimage for a woman to justify to her community was one she took on her own behalf. In such cases, she was not serving the needs of another, and therefore could not represent her decision to travel as an extension of her caregiving responsibilities. Nevertheless, half of female pilgrims were, in fact, seeking the saints for themselves; how, then, did they justify this dubious gadding about to themselves, their communities, the Church, and to the saints? Just as the problems women faced were dictated both by their biology and by their social roles, so too the authors grounded women's justifications for travel in these factors. Since women tended most often to suffer from chronic illness, the authors sought the empathy and credulity of their audiences by dwelling in some detail on the duration and severity of women's physical suffering. Further, the authors excused women's decisions to travel by downplaying women's agency in the decision to take up pilgrimage.

The chronic, less traumatic, and less varied health problems that medieval women sought to heal left them in a difficult position. They needed help, but their needs were often not as overtly life-threatening or dramatic as those of their male counterparts, whereas the traumatic or emergency nature of some of the situations experienced by men created a sense of urgency that easily generated empathy. Only 2.6% of women were healed of injuries, and only 3.7% were preserved from danger; but 15.5% of men were healed of injuries, and 10.2% were preserved from danger. (See Figure 8.) Rates of injury varied from collection to collection because saints tended to specialize in particular varieties of miracles, with Dorthea of Montau healing only three injuries while Henry VI addressed forty-seven of them.[58] Even so, accidental injury was a profoundly male concern in each collection. Even when

[58] For a description of his specialization in injury, see Leigh Ann Craig, "Royalty, Virtue, and Adversity: The Cult of King Henry VI," *Albion* 35, no. 2 (Summer, 2003): 187–209.

they were assessed separately, in each collection more than four-fifths of those healed of or protected from injury were male. The forty-eight stories wherein the saints prevented shipwreck or drowning provide an excellent example of the contrast in immediacy between chronic illness and accident or emergency. Shipwreck stories described only four women and three mixed-gender groups; in all other cases, it was men who found themselves in these dire circumstances. Thus it was for Judicellus Omensy and Guido Cubis, who were caught in a shipwreck:[59]

> . . . they were in a small boat at sea, distant from land; and the said little boat, because of too many bundles and crowds and contrary winds, sank under the water; the aforesaid Judicellus and Guido, seeing their peril, vowed themselves to St. Yves; and nevertheless the boat and all the aforesaid people sank under the water and were drowned, except the aforesaid Judicellus and Guido and four others who evaded the danger of drowning.

The severity of the danger here was proven by the loss of the suppliants' shipmates, with no further justification required. Like the suppliants, we, the audience, 'see their peril' with perfect clarity.

But stories of female pilgrims, which tended not to feature hanging, drowning, or other life-threatening accidents, provided justifications for their desire to approach the saints that were equally intended to arouse empathy. Most commonly, biological justifications for women's self-serving pilgrimages rested on ways of representing a woman's illness as severe and problematic, and hence worthy of unusual effort to eradicate. But since women suffered more often from illnesses that were not life-threatening, such justifications were less intrinsically obvious than they were for endangered men like Judicellus and Guido. Instead, the authors took pains to excuse the travels of women who were cured of chronic illnesses such as blindness, pain, deafness, and paralysis—women who account for than one in ten of all suppliants in all of the miracle stories—by means of a persistent focus on the duration and severity of their suffering. While both men and women were described as suffering from pain, women were generally said to have been suffering for

[59] "De s. Yvo Presbytero Trecorii," *Acta Sanctorum*, May IV, 567: ". . . essent in una navicula in mari, distantes a terra; & dicte navicula, propter nimium sarcinam & inundationes & ventum contrarium, aquas subintraret; Judicellus & Guido praedicti, videntes periculum, D. Yvoni se voverunt: & nihilominus navis et omnes personae praedictae aquas subintraverunt, & fuerunt submersae, exceptis Judicellus & Guido praedictis, & aliis quatuor, qui periculum submersionis evaserunt."

longer than men who brought the same complaints to the saints, and the severity of that pain is more heavily emphasized.[60]

These texts do not always provide clear statements of the duration of chronic illnesses, and descriptors of pain cannot be precisely quantified. But an exploration of miracles that describe blindness and maladies of the eyes provides one example of how women's cases were the subject of especially sympathetic rhetoric. Cures of blindness, one of Jesus' miracles, appear in all of the collections, and either because of the Gospel precedent or the concrete nature of the symptoms, such stories generally used similar terminology, regardless of author or region. However, because of the unmistakable and intrusive nature of the problem, almost every miracle related to blindness records the duration of the suppliant's suffering. Twenty-eight women and twenty-five men sought help for blindness or some other eye trouble in the collections under consideration here. But although men and women are fairly evenly represented, they are portrayed differently. Blindness in female suppliants was described as a long-term problem, generally much longer-term than in men. Where the duration of the affliction was listed, less than a quarter of men (6 cases) were afflicted for more than a year, but nearly half of women (13 cases) were. The longest that a man was blind was seven years, and this case was extremely unusual—the next longest was a case of three years' duration. Meanwhile, about a third of blind women (nine cases) were blind for seven years or more. (See Figure 9.)

Not only were women blind longer, they suffered more pain than men in conjunction with their blindness. Women were more than twice as likely as men to be described as experiencing pain alongside their eye trouble (28.6% of blind women as opposed to 12% of blind men). In the case of Margareta, the wife of Peter, pain was the primary problem with her eyes: "For fourteen days she was so vehemently struck by a pain in her eyes, that she was not able to recognize anything nor walk in the road without a leader."[61] In some cases the pain suffered by blind women was so severe that it led to further problems. Dorthea, the wife of Berthold, suffered thirteen years of pain so severe that "many times"

[60] On pain understood as common to both genders, see Esther Cohen, "The Expression of Pain in the Later Middle Ages: Deliverance, Acceptance, and Infamy," in *Bodily Extremities: Preoccupations with the Human Body in Early Modern European Culture*, ed. Florike Egmond and Robert Zwijnenberg (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 195–219.

[61] Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau*, 38: "…per 14 dies dolorem sic vehementissime passa est, quod quemquam cognoscere non potuit nec per viam ambulare sine ductore."

it nearly drove her insane.[62] Pain was only infrequently mentioned in cases of blind men, and when it is, it was rarely described in detail; but women's pain was 'most grave,' 'most vehement,' and even a threat to their sanity.[63]

Cases of blindness in men look quite different. Not only were men blinded for a shorter period of time, but men alone suffered this fate as the result of accidents or as supernatural punishments, rather than as the result of a disease process. Among the twenty-five blind men, one man's loss of sight was a symptom of his insanity,[64] three were blinded by the saints as a punishment for blasphemy and other misbehaviors,[65] and three were blinded by an accident or violence.[66] By contrast, all blindness in women, where blindness was their primary complaint, was the result of an illness of some kind. Altogether, then, blind women were the victims of chronic illness, and they were portrayed as suffering longer and from a more painful affliction than their male counterparts. All of these factors create a sense of sympathy that justifies their decision to travel. Similar biological justifications appear frequently in other descriptions of women's chronic illness.

The rhetoric of the intense and long suffering of blind women is thrown into high relief when compared to the rhetoric used in cases of childbirth gone awry. Parturition, a commonplace but serious threat to women's health, was the only immediately life-threatening emergency that appeared with any regularity among female suppliants. Only

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[62] Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau*, 41: "Ac etiam passa est per totum dictum tempus gravissimum capitis dolorem et ita vehementer, quod aliquotiens quasi in vesaniam mentis incidebat."

[63] See, for example, Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau,* 36–7; Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 302–5; Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 123–4.

[64] "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum,* April II, 825; the man's behavioral aberrance, of which blindness was only one feature, was clearly puzzling to the author, who described him as one 'tamquam adversatus,' behaving 'as if possessed.'

[65] These cases include Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 112, wherein a man was suddenly blinded after blaspheming; Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 133–8, where Henry struck a male blasphemer blind; and Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau von 1394 bis 1521*, 44, where a man spent eight days 'miraculously' blind.

[66] These cases included Campbell, ed., *Enquête pour les process de canonization de Dauphine de Puimichel*, 79–80, in which a man who doubted her ability was humbled into asking for help when a horse injured his eye; Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 142, where a man had been blind for three years 'out of misfortune,' and Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 26–31, where a cleric had his eyes gouged out by two attackers.

seventeen cases of miraculous interventions in childbirth appear; they are present in five of the seven collections, and are especially heavily concentrated in the miracles of Birgitta of Sweden and Yves.[67] Problems in parturition risked the well-being of both a primary caregiver and a family heir, and hence childbirth was a dangerous moment for an entire household. But even so, the rhetoric of suffering in these stories was not exceptionally dramatic. While any of these laboring women could easily have been described as suffering, the overtly life- and community-threatening nature of their situation meant that most authors did not feel any need to emphasize that pain with the kind of specificity we saw in the cases of blindness above. Instead, the very fact of a long and difficult labor or a stillbirth, without further comment, was considered enough to explain the need for a pilgrimage; in the words of Esther Cohen, "(n)obody ever questioned the reality of labour pains."[68]

This case, recorded in the miracles of Birgitta of Sweden, is the most descriptive of suffering, and it dwells on emotional, rather than bodily, pain:[69]

> A certain woman in Sceningia gave birth to an infant that was drawing its last breath, and at once it died. And so the aforesaid woman, *afflicted with great pain, especially because the infant had died without baptism*, began along with all those around her tearfully to ask the lady Birgitta that her offspring might be given life long enough that he could be baptized. Which having been done, and not without admiration and congratulations by all those standing around her, the baby revived and was baptized. The woman, a few weeks later, came to Vadstena and bringing with her the said infant alive and unharmed she gave praise to omnipotent God and blessed Birgitta for the grace they had given her, offering a silver effigy of an infant. (Emphasis mine.)

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[67] Such cases do not appear in the records of either of the Italian cults, those of Agnes of Montepulciano and Simone da Todi.

[68] Cohen, "The Expression of Pain in the Later Middle Ages," 202.

[69] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 157–8: "Mulier quedam in Sceningia peperit infantem in ultimo spiritu consitutum, qui et statim omnino mortuus est. Unde mulier antedicta nimio dolore afflicta, maxima quia infans sine baptismo decesserat, cepit cum omnibus se circumstantibus dominam Brigidam lacrimose rogare, ut proles sua tamdiu vite redderetur, quamdiu baptizaretur. Quo facto non sine admiracione et congratulacione omnium circumstancium reuixit infans et baptizatus est. Hec mulier aliquibus septimanis transactis veniens Wastenam et portans secum dictum infantum viuum et jncolumem omnipotentem Deum et beatam Brigidam collaudauit pro gracia sibi facta, similitudinem infantis argenteam offerendo."

Other stories centering on problematic deliveries, rather than the loss of a newborn, give only brief clinical descriptions of the facts of the case, bare of the rhetoric of pain. But even now, such facts are by themselves more than sufficient to make anyone cognizant of the mechanics of childbirth wince. Descriptions of labors that lasted three days or more were common; yet even the two longest labors described, one lasting nine and the other fifteen days, still included no mention of the women's pain or exhaustion. The nine-day labor was the subject of many pilgrimage vows without any noticeable effect, until a vow to Birgitta of Sweden brought on a particularly easy birth. Although the woman in question had had eight babies before, "never before had she given birth with such ease and safety."[70] The reiteration of pilgrimage vows in her case indicated the acceptability of her choice to be come a pilgrim. But while they give her the agency to make vows, the authors exerted no particular effort to describe the woman's suffering for those nine (!) days. The story of the fifteen-day childbirth of a woman named Mencia, which was finally ended by an appeal to St. Yves, did not discuss the issue of pain, either. Instead, the text dwelt on other physical symptoms that indicated the emergency nature of the crisis: "…she became spotted (*guttosa*); her limbs, and especially her shins and legs, became all black, and she was almost dead."[71] Mencia was so ill that she was no longer able to make the vow for herself, and so she was one of the few laboring women whose vow was made by another person (her mother).

The sense that a woman in the process of parturition or facing a stillbirth was perfectly entitled to seek help from the saints—just like her brothers in a storm at sea, but unlike her sisters in less dramatic situations—was underscored in other ways. Unlike cases of blindness, where witnesses are often listed and independent confirmation of the illness offered, a woman's word about the status of her pregnancy was presented as sufficient evidence of her need. Stories of women who became pilgrims because they feared their babies had died while still in utero, for example, rely entirely on the mother's word that she had

[70] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 160: "…cum octo prius peperisset infantulos, numquam tanta facilitate et incolumitate pariebat prius."

[71] "De s. Yvo Presbytero Trecorii," *Acta Sanctorum*, May IV, 565: "Quod Mencia… praegnans laboravit pro partu quasi per quindecim dies, propter quod fuit effecta guttosa; & membra sua, maxime tibiae & crura, fuerunt quam plurimum nigra effecta, & ipsa quasi mortua facta…"

lost any sensation of her infant's movements within her. This maternal sense of the baby's well-being was regarded as reliable: Blancha, for example, "was pregnant with a live infant that she felt many times, just as pregnant women are accustomed to feel {them}," and then she stopped feeling the infant's movements for five days. The author trusted her intuition without further witnesses: "…and she and her belly were frigid; neither was their movement for the said five days, and she felt other signs of death, which pregnant women feel, when they have dead infants in their bellies."[72] Similarly, Ayselena 'sensed' that the baby she was delivering had died before she appealed to Dauphine for help, and this 'sense' was proof enough for the writer who recorded her story.[73]

In fact, pilgrimages seeking help in matters of parturition were so fundamentally acceptable that the process of childbirth seems not to have consistently triggered the taboo on gynecological blood loss in holy places. Menstruation had long been considered ritually unclean, and a menstruating woman unsuitable for admittance into sacred spaces, based on a prohibitions in Leviticus 15.[74] One of the parturition miracles turned on this taboo. Yves interceded to end Mencia's fifteen-day labor while she was still at home, but to help prove that the safe delivery was nonetheless a miraculous one, Mencia delivered her son painlessly while she slept, and he appeared "without a spot of blood or other filth, as if he had been thoroughly bathed," a parturition which closely corresponds with contemporary descriptions of the Nativity.[75] Despite this taboo against the mess of childbirth, two pregnant women

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[72] "De s. Yvo Presbytero Trecorii," *Acta Sanctorum,* May IV, 565: "Quod Blancha…praegnans de vivo infante qeum pluries senserat, sicut moris est mulieres praegnantes sentire; post stetit per quinque dies quod eum viventem non sensit, sed potius mortuum; & ipsum & ventrem suum frigidos: nec se movit de dictis quinque diebus: & alia signa mortis sentiebat, quae sentiunt mulieres praegnantes, habentes mortuos in ventre infantes."

[73] Campbell, ed., *Enquête pour les process de canonization de Dauphine de Puimichel*, 83.

[74] For discussions of clerical anxiety about menstruation, parturition, and sacred space, see Patricia Crawford, "Attitudes towards menstruation in seventeenth-century England," *Past and Present* 91 (1981): 60; Carole Rawcliffe, "Women, Childbirth, and Religion in Later Medieval England," in *Women and Religion in Medieval England,* ed. Diane Wood (Oxford, UK: Oxbow Books, 2003), 96; and Katherine Allen Smith, "Mary or Michael? Saint-Switching, Gender, and Sanctity in a Medieval Miracle of Childbirth," *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 74, no. 4 (2005), 758–783.

[75] "De s. Yvo Presbytero Trecorii," *Acta Sanctorum,* May IV, 565: "…& dicta filiam nnudam invenit absque macula sanguinis vel aliarum sordium, ac si fuisset pluries balneata…" On the clinical nature of the nativity, see Carole Rawcliffe, "Women, Childbirth, and Religion in Later Medieval England," 91.

were welcome not only to make pilgrimages to the tomb of Birgitta of Sweden, but ultimately to give birth there. One of them had suffered an extended labor, sought Birgitta at her shrine, and "scarcely had {she} entered the house of the Lady Birgitta's relics when she gave birth and was freed from all danger."[76] Another woman whose labor had been so hard that the baby died in utero was delivered of a healthy baby when she arrived at Vadstena after making a pilgrimage vow.[77] Indeed, not only safe deliveries, but even signifiers of a healthy pregnancy were welcome at tombs. When a woman called Blancha stopped feeling her baby move, St. Yves not only prevented a stillbirth, he even blessed her womb so successfully that "the belly of the said Blancha also swelled up, such that the dress, belt, and tunic that she had around her belly ripped open."[78] The sudden eruption of her gravid belly at the shrine constituted a dramatic approval of both the healthy pregnancy and of the pilgrimage required to achieve it.

Biology, then, could be used to justify a woman's pilgrimage. While chronic disease was not a life-threatening circumstance on a par with shipwreck, hanging, or injury, if a woman suffered sufficiently long or suffered sufficient levels of pain—to wit, more than men suffered, on either count—her pilgrimage became justifiable. And the one situation wherein a woman's biology threatened both her life and the ongoing life of the community was accepted as a basis for pilgrimage with the same lack of persuasive rhetoric as the many accidents that befell her male counterparts. A female pilgrim's justifications need not rest solely on biological factors, however. There were also a variety of social circumstances in the stories that might support a woman's decision to seek help from the saints for herself. While women might be genuinely pitiable in their suffering, the collaborative authors of miracle stories nonetheless sought to reinforce their acceptability yet further by lessening a woman's responsibility for her decision to become a pilgrim. Hence, the collaborative authors shrouded the agency of female pilgrims in narrative silence, or removed it altogether by describing their pilgrimages as the results of divine commands.

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[76] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 145: "…mox ut reliquie domine Brigide domum mulieris ingresse sunt, peperit et ab omni periculo est liberata."

[77] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 153.

[78] "De s. Yvo Presbytero Trecorii," *Acta Sanctorum*, May IV, 565: "Et venter ipsius Blanchae adeo inflavit, quod hardelonus, zonae, et tunica quam habebat indutam circa ventrem, ruperunt."

The decision which converted a suffering person into a pilgrim was a pivotal moment in the stories, one that marked the turning point where the tale was transformed from a dreary illness narrative into a joyful and wondrous account of divine intervention. This moment was encapsulated in the making of vows, formal promises to a saint to take a pilgrimage to his or her shrine, offer a gift, or perform some other penitential act. The vow could be a powerful moment of agency, wherein an untenable situation would be transformed by the decisive action of one or more devout Christians. This very agency, however, was the problem, especially for self-serving female pilgrims; they were *choosing* to travel, and as the motives and outcomes of such choices were considered problematic, their acceptability was limited. As a woman's desire to become a pilgrim could mark her as an imitator of La Vielle or Alison of Bath, the precise moment in which female suppliants made a decision or commitment to pilgrimage was a delicate one. A detailed investigation of the ways that vows were presented and described in these narratives shows that in the stories of female pilgrims, the active decision to undertake the journey could be masked and underplayed if the agency represented by that vow might have caused tension.

Vows to the saints were the most common method of initiating a request for the saint's intercession; in some 58.4% of the narratives in these collections the protagonists are portrayed as having made some sort of a vow. Vauchez has commented on the binding nature of vows to saints, which "always contained . . . a precise commitment or series of commitments, the performance of which constituted either the prior condition or the price paid for the miracle."[79] Each time a pilgrim made a vow, she created an obligation which medieval society and all major forms of medieval law took seriously as both a spiritual and a legal commitment. Verbal vows of this sort were upheld as valid contracts in Roman civil law, one of the most important legal systems of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[80] Canon law also held such verbal exchanges to be valid contracts; the question of clandestine marriage contracts, made privately and verbally between the two parties to be wed, demonstrates again the legal power of verbal promises. Although they created significant social problems, clandestine vows were con-

[79] Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 453.

[80] Alan Watson, *Roman Law and Comparative Law* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1991), 53–57; and Salvatore Riccobono, *Stipulation and the Theory of Contract*, trans. J. Kerr Wylie (Amsterdam: A. A. Balkema, 1957), 28, and 146 ff.

sidered by theologians to constitute a valid sacramental marriage (in some cases, only so long as the verbal promise was accompanied by sexual intercourse.)[81] Despite the Church's attempts to prevent disputes by encouraging marriages to be contracted in public, the curia at no time negated the validity of verbally-contracted ones. Even urban legal structures in the later Middle Ages had to cope with the problems of verbal contracts; Hanawalt's work on forms of non-adjudicated conflict resolution in later medieval London shows that business contracts, which were "often oral," were submitted to various forms of arbitration when the relationship they delineated went awry.[82] Interestingly, all of these forms of verbal contract encompassed both socioeconomic promises and a sense of sacred obligation. The Latin verb *spondere*, meaning either 'to promise or betroth,' "is connected with the Greek word *sponde*, a libation made to the gods, and so it looks as if an oath was originally involved."[83] Christian marriage was also both a contract and a sacred vow. And Hanawalt notes that in cases where arbitration was used to solve disputes, a spiritual element was frequently a part of the proceedings.[84]

In miracle stories, the pilgrimage vow was portrayed as a verbal contract just as binding as those made in pledge of a marriage or a sale, all of which must be fulfilled in all their particulars for fear of retribution. Sometimes those particulars became very involved. A poor man who sought healing from Birgitta of Sweden made three successive vows, promising a specific action or gift in each iteration. He originally vowed a visit to the shrine with money and offerings; in a second vow, he specified that he would bring a gift of wax. Each of these vows failed to bring the desired result, so in the third attempt, he promised an eight-day visit to the shrine, and was cured overnight. The text concluded by noting that he did fulfill all of the conditions of his final vow.[85] Like notaries and other court personnel in a number of contexts, the scribe who wrote out this tale recorded the contents of

[81] James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 235–38.

[82] Hanawalt, "The Power of Word and Symbol: Conflict Resolution in Late Medieval London," in *Of Good and Ill Repute: Gender and Social Control in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 39.

[83] Watson, *Roman Law and Comparative Law*, 54.

[84] Hanawalt, "Power of Word and Symbol," 39–41.

[85] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 151.

the man's verbal contract—and his fulfillment of all those clauses—in specific detail.

It was important to fulfill the terms of such a contract because the consequences of cheating a saint, like those of shortchanging a business partner, could be severe. Even those who did not fulfill their vows a in a timely fashion, like a hunchbacked man cured by Henry VI, might be warned in dreams or visions to complete their vows as soon as possible.[86] Outright contractual failures on the part of pilgrims were often punished with a revocation of the miracle, which might cause suffering for the subject of that miracle even if he or she was innocent of the lapse. For example, a mother who promised a pilgrimage to Birgitta of Sweden on behalf of her possessed daughter, but did not fulfill it, was forced to promise again on two different occasions at nine-week intervals because of relapses of her daughter's pain, until the child's suffering was so severe that "the mother, struck with a great fear, seized the girl and hurried to go to the aforesaid monastery," where her daughter was finally cured.[87] Further, as miracles both healed the sick and glorified the saints, the narratives about miracles make it clear that the saints (and the authors of their miracles) wanted to be certain *both* functions were fulfilled. As such, a suppliant might also be punished for performing his pilgrimage too quietly. For example, Martin Wolff, who suffered from a fistula for three years, suffered a relapse of his condition seven weeks after his cure even though he completed his pilgrimage to Dorthea of Montau, because during his pilgrimage he failed to make his cure public knowledge. A woman (perhaps Dorthea herself?) appeared to him in his sleep to reprimand him for his ingratitude, and he returned to the shrine to openly declare the miracle.[88] A woman whose daughter suffered from a quartain fever also had to return to Dorthea's shrine to make the miracle public so that it would stick.[89] Anna, the wife of Hannis Greber, underwent a similarly harrowing series of events in

[86] Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 72–3.

[87] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 177: "…propter quod mater timore mango concussa apprehendit filiam et festinabat ad monasterium predictum venire, quo cum venisset, in continenti omnino curata est puella nec umquam postea vexacionem illam perpessa est."

[88] Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau von 1394 bis 1521*, 32–3 and 364–5.

[89] Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau von 1394 bis 1521*, 35.

coping with an unidentified 'grave illness.'[90] Thus, an avowed pilgrim was compelled both to fulfill her vows *and* to tell her story.

The collaborative authors of miracle stories, however, recorded vows in miracle stories according to a variety of formulae. Each of the seven collections I have examined contains examples of each of the following types of vow. Across all seven collections, some 30.1% of vows were *conditional*: they laid out clear and specific agreements as to what was being offered to the saint as a price for his or her help. For this term I am indebted to Sigal, who has commented on such vows as they appeared in eleventh- and twelfth-century miracle collections: "A certain number of vows clearly had a conditional character: the promised object would be given or the promised action would be accomplished if the saint produced that which one had asked."[91] For example, when a monk named Jacob fell ill, one of his brethren, Peter, promised Dauphine that "if she would heal the aforesaid man, his brother, who was near to death, by her intercession, then he would visit her grave barefoot and with a wax image weighing ten pounds."[92]

However, not every recorded vow was this clearly delineated, nor hinged this entirely on the receipt of help. Instead, 28.3% of all of the narratives recorded a vow or other verbal contract was *non-conditional*: a promise had been made, but the text provides us with few or no clear details about the contents of those agreements. In some cases, would-be pilgrims simply promised to go on pilgrimage, and the narrative does not specify any strings attached to this action either before or after the pilgrimage was to be completed. This was the case for a man in Stockholm who had suffered pain in his ears for a month. "He vowed to go on pilgrimage to see her bones where they resided in Vadstena,"[93] and while this phrasing did not make a miracle a precondition to the travel, the man was immediately healed. Further, some pilgrims were not portrayed as having made vows at all, but instead as praying or

[90] Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau von 1394 bis 1521*, 45.

[91] Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle*, 82: "Un certain nombre de vœux ont un caractère nettement conditionnel: l'objet promis sera donné ou l'action promise sera accomplie si le saint effectue ce qu'on lui a demandé."

[92] Campbell, ed., *Enquête pour les process de canonization de Dauphine de Puimichel*, 81–82: "…si dictum eius fratrem, qui morti proximus erat, sua intercessione sanaret, eius visitaret sepulcrum discalciatis pedibus et cum ymagine cerea ponderis decem librarum."

[93] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 158: "…vovit peregrinando visere ossa sua in Wastenom collocata…"

calling out to a particular saint for help (especially in emergency situations). Prayers like those of the mother of two-year-old Margareta, who appeared to have died, were common: "honoring the lady Birgitta and humbly imploring her for the restitution of her daughter, she did not desist from praying" until the child was healed.[94] Some 13.1% of these cases contained such a reference to prayer—a request—without a reference to a pilgrimage vow, contract, or bargain of any kind.

Finally, 28.6% of the narratives contained no record at all of a vow, either because none was made, or because the author was disinterested in this facet of the story. It is possible, for example, that no vow was made by eleven-year-old Jacob, who had fallen and broken his arm. He suffered paralysis in the arm until he arrived in Bologna and heard of the miracles of Simone da Todi, whereupon "he came with his whole heart and soul pure to the grave of the blessed Simone, and here he stayed yesterday and today," and was healed.[95] But then, it is also possible that the vow was simply not recorded. The authors sometimes neglected to record anything about the suppliant beyond describing what need brought him or her to the shrine; this was the case in most of the miracles of St. Simone, a collection notable for its brevity.

We must again remember that miracle stories do not represent a direct transmission of the pilgrim's experiences. It is clear that given collections prefer to use particular formats when recording vows, as with other elements of the story. It is also clear that the majority of scribes did not feel it was necessary to capture all the particulars of the vow; more than half of all the stories recorded a non-conditional vow or none at all. Hence, we do not know that individual pilgrims used different sorts of approaches to the saint, but rather than they were recorded in different ways. Whether the nature of that record was determined by the pilgrim's own words, by the interpolations of scribes, or even by both is immaterial; either way, the narratives represent a broadly acceptable consensus about the experience, not the experience itself. Given that this is the case, it is worth noting which miracles record the details of a conditional verbal contract, and which casually refer to a vow without any further detail. When all 711 narratives are taken

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[94] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 142–143: "Quod attendens mater pro restitucione filie honorandam dominam Brigidam humiliter jimplorabat non desistens a prece…"

[95] "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 829: "…venit toto corde puro & animo ad arcam B. Simonis; & ibi stetit heri & hodie…"

together, no overtly gendered trend in the recording of pilgrimage vows appears. Women and men appear in roughly equal numbers making specific vows, vague or open-ended vows, prayers, and no vows at all. In none of these categories do the percentages of men or women taking a particular kind of vow differ by more than 3.5%, and most suggest a close parity between genders. (See Figure 10). But when we separate out suppliants seeking the saints for themselves from those acting as intercessors, a strongly gendered trend appears. Women (alone or in groups) who acted for their own benefit constituted less than one-third of those making conditional vows. Men acting for themselves, on the other hand, constituted more than two-thirds of those making conditional vows. (See Figure 11.) Thus, women who were acting in a self-serving, and hence potentially questionable, way were far less likely than men to have been portrayed as making a specific and binding promise to go on pilgrimage. Relative gender parity appears once more among those who made non-conditional vows or offered prayers. But women are strongly overrepresented among those whose stories recorded no vow at all; indeed, even though women are significantly outnumbered by men among self-serving suppliants, among the vowless they outnumber men outright. I would propose that, given the legal context of the use of verbal contracts, these trends represent a tendency on the part of the collaborative authors to sweep self-serving women's vows under the rug, in order to downplay their most agency-filled and thus most socially contrary moment: the making of a binding commitment to serve their own needs by becoming pilgrims.

The collaborative authors, and particularly the scribes who crafted the final text, often favored one sort of written formula over another; so, for example, the authors of Henry VI's miracles depicted over half of Henry's suppliants as using prayer rather than a vow, and Simone's tightly-condensed miracles did not record a vow at all in nearly half of the narratives. Nonetheless, no single collection is responsible for the overall trend divorcing self-serving women from specific vows. Two collections, those of Simone and Dorthea, did contain relatively large numbers of stories about self-serving female pilgrims who used one type of vow. These were also two collections that featured relatively high percentages of female suppliants as compared to other collections. (See Figure 2.) Dorthea's collection favored a portrayal of self-serving women who took nonspecific vows, but in four other collections, the rate at which women take this sort of vow outstrips that of men. Simone's miracles, on the other hand, repeatedly portrayed self-serving women

who took no vow at all, which contributed to the enormous disparity between vowless men and vowless women pilgrims when all collections were assessed together; only two other collections, those of Agnes and Dauphine, show this sort of pattern, the miracles of Henry VI deviate from the aggregate trend, and three others show a close gender-parity. (See Figure 12.) However, conditional vows remained a male preserve in most collections. Male pilgrims were more likely than female ones to take a self-serving vow in five of the seven collections, with relative gender parity in the miracles of Yves and a reversal of this trend in the miracles of Henry VI.

The agency of self-serving female pilgrims could be downplayed in other ways, as well. Some female pilgrims who acted on their own behalves were portrayed as having the decision to become a pilgrim made for them by the saints, who were often active characters in their own miracle stories, appearing to their devotees in visions. Forty-seven pilgrims who sought help for themselves, appearing in five of the seven collections, experienced a vision of a saint.[96] Despite the later-medieval commonplace of the female visionary (of which Birgitta herself was one), and despite the seeming ease with which a woman might excuse her pilgrimage based on a vision (as it was not externally verifiable), women did not predominate amongst visionary pilgrims. Instead, about three-fifths of self-serving visionary pilgrims were male.[97]

However, the types of visions experienced by female pilgrims are noteworthy. Visions could occur at any point in the narrative: after the miracle, after a vow had been made but no miracle had yet occurred, or at the shrine itself. As such, visions served a variety of narrative functions, and not every vision involved an invitation or command to become a pilgrim. Only twelve cases, again appearing across five collections, encompassed a specific invitation like that which was extended to the demoniac Christina, the wife of Laurence. "In her sleep a certain honorable-seeming person appeared to her, counseling her that for healing from the otherworldly spirit and the restitution of her senses and the vigor of her body, she should visit the monastery of the venerable lady Birgitta on a pilgrimage."[98] When we consider those

[96] No visions were recorded in the concise miracles of Simone, or in the miracles of Dauphine.

[97] The rest are accounted for by groups and by cases where the gender of the suppliant is not listed.

[98] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 118: "Huic in sompnis

whose visions, like Christina's, included a sacred invitation, we get a very different picture of the visionary experiences of men and women. Twelve self-serving pilgrims received such sacred invitations; seven were women, and five were men. This means that about half of self-serving visionary women experienced a vision that extended an invitation to become a pilgrim, whereas fewer than a quarter of self-serving visionary men were specifically invited or commanded to become pilgrims. Thus, women were not associated with supernatural communications, unless they were claiming a supernatural command to become a pilgrim in the first place. Such a pattern again downplayed women's agency in the decision-making process, situating their pilgrimages a matter of obedience, rather than willfulness.

The saints were not the only ones who could assume some measure of responsibility for a woman's travel; so could their community. For example, Margareta, the wife of Peter, was only blind for fourteen days, but she could not see or walk without help, and she came to the shrine of Dorthea von Montau to pray "having been led {there} by her male servant."[99] In being led, Margareta was protected by the presence of a male who was ostensibly in charge of her well-being (and perhaps her behavior). Furthermore, she was also performing the seriousness of her problem for other pilgrims and for the reader of the miracle story. Such interactions echo the language which described compulsory pilgrimages that will be explored in Chapter 5, in which women had no choice but to participate—in some cases, because they were being dragged bodily to shrines by their relatives and friends.

The few stories about female pilgrims who sought to cure pain that was of a relatively short duration provide excellent examples of how these other justifications—suffering and divine intervention—could work together in their defense. The pain suffered by one English woman for a mere three months was represented as being excessively severe in order to compensate for its brevity. It is of interest that the pain was specifically described as being as severe as childbirth, a condition which we have seen provided blanket justification for pilgrimage. Nevertheless, it

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apparuit persona quedam venerando habitu consulens sibi, quod pro mundacione ab jimmundo spiritu sensusque ac vigore corporis restitucione monasterium venerabilis domine Brigide peregre visitaret."

[99] Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau*, 38: "Que per famulum suum ad sepulchrum beate Dorthee ducta oratione et invocatione devotissima ipsius domine Dorthee lucidum receipt visum…"

was not *really* childbirth, and the woman in question still did not make a pilgrimage vow until a spiritual voice prompted her to do so, relieving her of responsibility for the decision.[100] In another story, a Swedish woman whose pain lasted only three days was suffering because she had blasphemed against the vengeful Birgitta, who was punishing her; her pilgrimage was therefore a necessary step in placating the saint, and again, was not entirely her decision.[101]

Women who sought the saints in order to heal their own maladies, then, found themselves negotiating difficult territory. They had to appear to be passive, or be understood as passive, in order to do something active; and given the negative assumptions often made about female pilgrims, they had to display both that passivity and that activity to the satisfaction of others. That far fewer women than men were described as having sought help for themselves may have been true because such a feat was difficult indeed. Whether some women chose to avoid self-serving pilgrimages altogether, chose not to publicize them, or were unable to publicize them, the mistrust of female pilgrims was nonetheless reproduced in the sources which describe miracles.

The Holy Matron: From Legitimacy to Imitatio Sancti

While a little over half of stories told by these collaborative authors described female pilgrims who undertook self-serving pilgrimages, roughly another two-fifths of were acting not for themselves, but on behalf of another. Female intercessors stand out in a variety of ways. To begin with, it was far more common for women to act as intercessors than for men to do the same. Only about a quarter of male pilgrims acted as intercessors. (See Figure 5.) Secondly, these women, unlike their self-serving female counterparts, could confidently frame their pilgrimages as a natural extension of their normative roles as caregivers, a confidence which is reflected in the details of the narratives. But perhaps the most surprising element of these stories is that narratives describing female intercessors sometimes move beyond treating a woman's pilgrimage as justifiable, as in the stories that describe women who sought aid for long-term chronic conditions or childbirth. Instead,

[100] Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 221–2.
[101] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 128.

female intercessors are presented as laudable. Hence, the women who told such stories, and those who helped to write them down, created between them an image of female pilgrimage quite different from the satiric or prescriptive trope of the wandering woman. Instead they presented female pilgrims as conduits of grace who could be interpreted not only as good mothers, good Christians, and good pilgrims, but even as quasi-saints.

Not only were women generally more likely than men to serve as intercessors and thus as caregivers, they were very likely to serve in this capacity for their own children, or for the members of their households. The vast majority of women whose pilgrimages did not seek miracles for themselves were mothers seeking help for their children. In 144 stories parents sought to heal their children, and of these stories, roughly three-fifths (85 cases) described mothers acting alone.[102] (See Figure 13.) The preponderance of mothers is clear: three times as many mothers sought help for their children as did fathers, and roughly one third of women suppliants, acting alone or in groups, were mothers seeking help for their own children. Occasionally, female intercessors, acting alone or in groups, undertook pilgrimages to help family or household members other than their own offspring, such as their siblings, nieces or nephews, spouses, parents, the children they were wetnursing, or their monastic brethren.[103] Such caregiving patterns were not to be found among male suppliants in nearly the same numbers. Among parents who sought help for children, about one-fifth (29 cases) were fathers acting alone, and in a handful of cases the parents acted together. Only a small proportion of male intercessors sought help for household members other than children, although interestingly, in nine cases they sought help for their wives, meaning the traditional source of caregiving in the household needed some sort of assistance herself.[104]

Female intercessors, then, were most often mothers; as noted above, these mothers asked for intercession to fix a variety of problems, rather than limiting themselves to the chronic illnesses or reproductive problems which most often prompted them to seek help for themselves.

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[102] The remainder consists of a father who acted as a part of a group of men, and parents who acted as members of a mixed-gender group of people.

[103] In the remaining 1.9%, or five cases, selfless female suppliants were unrelated bystanders at the scene of some illness or trauma.

[104] Only one male bystander acted to help an unrelated person.

They were, as was also noted above, more likely to seek help for the males in their lives than the females, although they were also more likely to intercede for their daughters than their husbands were. That mothers should seek healing for their children seems to have been easily justifiable, a natural confluence of their day-to-day caregiving and childrearing responsibilities.[105] Hence, a pilgrimage on behalf of one's child was a logical extension of a woman's daily responsibilities within the home. The stories' descriptions of pilgrimage vows made in these cases underscore this interpretation. Where the stories of self-serving female pilgrims tended slightly more often than those of comparable men to use non-specific vows or no vows at all, the stories of female intercessors often featured detailed and specific vows that laid out all reciprocal responsibilities, and thus did not shy away from the agency that such agreements implied. For example, the miracles of Simone record that when a boy called Jacob was run down by a cart and in the street and appeared to have been killed, his mother "vowed him to God and to the blessed Simone, so that if her son should escape, she would make a painted figure and image of the said Blessed Simone, and offer certain other oblations."[106] Of the 106 female intercessors, some almost three-fifths (62) used a specific vow such as this one, a trend that stands in startling contrast to the less that one fifth (22, or 14.7%) of self-serving female pilgrims who did the same. Further, while nearly two-fifths (57) stories about self-serving female pilgrims recorded no vow at all, only three stories about female intercessors failed to mention this pivotal moment. (See Figure 14.) These trends hold true in six of the seven collections, with the unusual exception of Dorthea of Montau, in whose miracles no parents, either fathers or mothers, act as intercessors; instead, the intercession for children in her miracles is carried out by large mixed-gender groups of bystanders in the few relevant cases.

But the stories of mothers who acted as intercessors did more than acknowledge their agency in the process. The collaborative authors also understood and represented such women, and their pilgrimages, as praiseworthy. If, from the beginning of the tradition of the cult of

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[105] Margaret Wade LeBarge, *A Small Sound of the Trumpet: Women in Medieval Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 169.

[106] "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum,* April II, 823: "Et tunc d. Nivis uxor Bonafidei filii d. Joachimi & mater d. Jacobi, vovit eum Deo & B. Simoni, quod si ejus filius evaderet, faceret pingi figuram & imaginem d. B. Fr. Simonis, & offerret certas alias oblationes."

the saints, saints strove for the *imitatio Christi*—to live a life as much like Christ's as possible—then pilgrim intercessors might be said to engage in an *imitatio sancti*, a reenactment of the role of the saint as a bridge between a suppliant and God. According to orthodox theology, miracles are a gift from God; the saint was merely a patron who could appeal to God on the pilgrim's behalf, rather than the actual source of grace.[107] The saint—sometimes, in his or her physical form, as relics—then acted as a conduit for that grace. The concept of the saint as intercessor was deeply embedded in later medieval lay devotion, as well as in scholarly theological treatises. Most books of hours, for example, contained a version of the Litany of the Saints: an invocation of a long list of saints' names, to each of which the proper liturgical response was 'Ora pro Nobis'—Pray for Us.[108] Vernacular prayers expressed the same sentiment. For example, one prayer to Henry VI, which pleads for aid in times of distress, ends each verse with "Now sweyt kyng Henre praye for me."[109] Indeed, a significant facet of the Virgin Mary's popularity was the concept that she was too merciful to refuse even the most undeserving sinner, and also had the closest possible relationship to Christ; she was therefore always both willing and able to obtain grace for sinners.[110] Hence, the power of the saints rested not in their ability to create miracles, but in their ability to convince God to grant them; and when a living person prayerfully sought out a saint on behalf of another with miraculous results, he or she was acting precisely as the saint did. Indeed, Lisa Smoller has argued that successful intercession lent people social and religious importance, and that intercessors were often the central protagonists of a miracle story.[111]

A striking example of this *imitatio sancti*, and its effects on the image of the female pilgrim, can be found in the story of three-year-old Beatrice Shirley of Wiston, Sussex. Beatrice was killed in an accident and

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[107] See Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, Ch. 3, esp. 56–8; also, Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, 33–5.

[108] Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York: George Braziller, Inc, 1988), 101.

[109] John Blacman, *Henry the Sixth: A Reprint of John Blacman's Memoir with Translation and Notes*, ed. M. R. James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1919), 50–51.

[110] David A. Flory, *Marian Representations in the Miracle Tales of Thirteenth-century Spain and France* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 20, 82–3.

[111] Lisa A. Smoller, "Miracle, Memory, and Meaning in the Canonisation of Vincent Ferrer, 1453–1454," *Speculum* 73, no. 2 (April, 1998): 432. See also Hanska, "The Hanging of William Craigh," 128.

subsequently revived by King Henry VI through the intercession of her mother. Her story was recorded at Windsor on June 9, 1489, thus indicating that her mother both took a pilgrimage to Henry's shrine and proclaimed the miracle to the clerical authorities who managed it. The miracle was later confirmed by a papal investigation. The Shirleys' miracle story began with a detailed description of their need:

> A girl of three years old was sitting under a large stack of firewood in the company of other children of that age who were playing by themselves, when by a sudden and calamitous accident a huge trunk fell from the stack and threw her on her back in the mud, pinning her down so heavily as to deprive her instantly of the breath of life. It was not possible that the breath should remain in her when her whole frame was so shattered; for the trunk was of such a size that it could scarcely be moved by two grown men. You may be assured that the horror of the sight soon scattered the company of the child's friends, who forthwith ran to and fro in all directions, showing that something untoward had occurred by their screams or their flight, not by words. Perhaps it was this warning which made the child's father come up to see what had happened; and he, looking from some distance off, could see that it was his little Beatrice who lay stretched out there. Not a little alarmed, he hastened forward, and, on drawing near and finding her already carried off by so cruel a death, found his face grow pale, and his heart wrung with an agony of grief: yet, lifting the log with some difficulty, he lifted her in his hands. Then the fountains of his eyes were loosed, and, calling his wife, he put the poor corpse in her arms. She took her unhappy burden and laid it on her bosom; and so, almost fainting with her grief, and giving expression to it with heavy groans and loud wailing, she made for the church that stood hard by.[112]

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[112] Knox and Leslie, ed. and trans., *The Miracles of King Henry VI*, 51–52; or Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 35–6: "Siquidem puella quedam triennis dum coetaneis comitata suaptim lusitantibus sub stasse non modica focalium resideret, casu precipiti et infausto truncus ingens ex stasse proruens, tactam in pectore vel stomacho eam obruit, stratamque resupinam in lutum tanto pondere compressit, ut vitalem ex ea spiritum protinus effugaret. Neque enim possible erat tot corpore conquassato: in ea remanere vite spiraculum. Extitit quippe tantillus truncus ille, ut vix a duobus adultis potuisset ammoveri. Facti igitur horrore turbata socialis illa turba infancium continuo dispergitur, segregatique extemplo atque hinc inde cursitantes, vel ululatu fortasse vel fuga ipsa, non verbis, rem aliquam inopnatam contigisse significant. Quo fortassis ammonitus pater occurrit: cupiens quid actum sit agnoscere, prospiciensque eminus prostratam suam sobolem agnovit Beatricem. Attonitus igitur non modicum acceleravit gressum. Porro cum approprasset: cernens infantulam tam immani mortis genere iam defunctam, palluit vultu, cordeque concussus doloris spiculo, ammoto licet difficulter ligno, propriis eam allevavit manibus, ac demum erumpentibus oculorum fontibus, coniugem advocat, eique gemebundus hoc tam flebile funus dedit in manus. At illa, suscepto onere et in sinu collocato, pre tristicia iam pene privata spiritu, vehementiori gemitu alciorique flectu collacrimata haud longe positam adivit ecclesiam…"

Henry's miracles, as befit the cult of a former king, are unusually lengthy and detailed. In them we see a particularly informative combination of legal savvy and literary persuasion. The authors have included the specific details of the accident, as reported by those who personally witnessed it. They also included a specific diagnosis, one that should make a miracle hard to refute: little Beatrice, they emphasized, was, without a doubt, dead. Such details would be of interest to the papal investigations that would later take place. But the authors simultaneously engaged in a heavy-handed rhetorical evocation of the terror and anguish inspired by Beatrice's accident. We are told precisely how that distress was experienced and expressed by the children who saw the accident happen, as well as by each of Beatrice's parents.

When women, especially mothers, acted as intercessors, they not only performed the normative feminine duty of the caregiver, but were also motivated by a laudable love for their children and perfectly comprehensible anguish over the harm that had come to them. as Finucane has noted that many miracles describing the loss of children contained this element of parental distress and grief.[113] Other miracles under consideration here also note a mother's emotional distress; in another of Henry's miracles, for example, a woman whose child had been crushed by a cart took one look at the scene of the accident and assaulted the cart-driver in a rage.[114] Simone da Todi helped to heal a girl of a bladder-stone when her pain had become so severe that her mother prayed either for divine intervention or for her daughter to die quickly and be spared the agony she was suffering.[115] The scribes' care in relating this distress creates a sympathetic audience, one which might be less likely to question a woman's choice to become a pilgrim.

While the reader's empathy might be shared with both Beatrice's mother and her father, the responsibility for their child's well-being was not so evenly divided. Despite the fact that Beatrice's father was present at the scene of the accident, and despite the social complications that sometimes burdened the pilgrimages of women, in Beatrice's case it was entirely her mother's idea to seek divine intervention. In light of the rates of maternal and paternal intercession already noted above, the intervention of any mother is not particularly surprising, but in this

[113] Finucane, *Rescue*, 151–158.
[114] Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 200–203.
[115] "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 823.

text the mother's quick confidence in her own intercessory power is striking. Ignoring her husband, Beatrice's mother quite literally took matters into her own hands. In order to avert tragedy for herself and for the child, she chose to engage in an *imitatio sancti*, seeking divine grace on behalf of another. But her appeals for help, like the intercessory prayers of the saints, would only merit God's attention if they were made by a person in good spiritual standing. As we shall see, the miracle story emphasized that such prayers must arise from a devout heart and great faith—resources that must have been hard to marshal in the presence of shrieking children and an inconsolable spouse. Hence, Beatrice's mother engaged in her first act of public mobility, seeking her local church. The author made certain to explain this decision in detail: "There it was her purpose to pray earnestly to God for her daughter with sure faith and certain hope; for she thought it would be more acceptable to God if she disposed herself to prayer far removed from the tumultuous sight of people, and in a sacred place."[116] In decisively placing herself in sacred space to enhance her efforts as intercessor, however, Beatrice's mother also took sole responsibility for what followed.

Beatrice's mother was not only able to achieve a happy out come for her daughter, but also gained more social and spiritual status than we (having made the acquaintance of the Wife of Bath and her ilk) might expect. Having entered sacred space, she ritually enacted her intercessory role:[117]

> Inspired, it may be, by the example of that holy woman, the mother of the prophet Samuel, she bent her bare knees upon the ground and made known to the Lord her heart's desire no less by her tears than by her prayers. So with the sacrifice of a humble heart she besought God

[116] Knox and Leslie, ed. and trans., *The Miracles of King Henry VI*, 52; or Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 36: "Eo qippe magis placabile Deo credidit suum votum, quo vel ipsa a tumultuosis hominum conspectibus segregata, vel sacraciori loco se statuerit ad orandum."

[117] Knox and Leslie, ed. and trans., *The Miracles of King Henry VI*, 52–5; or Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 36–37: "Nam et illius sancte mulieris, matris scilicet Samuelis, exemplo fortisan provocata, nudis pavimento defixis genibus, non minus lacrimis quam vocibus Domino sue mentis pandebat desiderium. Exorabat itaque Deum humilitatis obsequiis, Dei genitricis flagitabat auxilium, demum et sanctissimum virum Henricum regem sui negocii singularem constituens advocatum, ipsius apud Wynsore preclarum tumulum devovit muneribus honorandum. Emisso itaque voto, mox intima devocione oracionem dominicam cum salutacione angelica quinquies ob eius honorem dicere disponebat.

> and called for the aid of his Mother. Finally, making that most blessed man King Henry her chief advocate in her need, she made a vow to honor with gifts his renowned tomb at Windsor. Her vow undertaken, she determined forthwith to say *Pater* and *Ave* five times in his honor with true devotion of heart.

First, we should note that just as Beatrice's mother did not hesitate to move herself and her daughter into the local church neither did she hesitate to make a binding pilgrimage vow that promised not only travel to his shrine, but also gifts. And her vow was not the only part of her relationship with the divine that was laid out in precise detail. The text presents a specific and entirely orthodox understanding of saintly intercession, wherein Beatrice's mother asked for divine intervention from its sole source, and cast Henry (and the Virgin Mary) as advocates for her case, rather than producers of miracles.

The collaborative authors of miracle stories, however, sometimes seemed to work with a more simplified understanding of the grace they had encountered. It was not uncommon for them to elide the distinction between the saint as an intercessor who *sought* grace and the saint as a *source* of grace. This muddying of the waters was particularly evident in cases where the saint intervened physically to avert some sort of accident or disaster. While God may have been the source of help when an individual was ill, it was Henry VI and Birgitta of Sweden, not God, who were observed in the act of preventing unjust hangings by physically supporting the intended victim.[118] Even where the saint was not directly indicated as the source of the miraculous power, rather than of intercession, scribes often used nonspecific language that left the source of the miracle open to the interpretation of the reader. This open-ended attribution of the miracle may be in part a result of the legal uses of the documents; canonization, after all, was intended to investigate and confirm the existence of a saint, and so judgment as to whether a given saint had produced a miracle should properly have been suspended until the conclusion of the investigation. Thus, the texts commonly incorporate an agentless passive, as in this example

[118] Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 106–112; Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 68–9. Kent G. Hare, "Apparitions and War in Anglo-Saxon England," in *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages: Essays On Medieval Military and Naval History* ed. Donald J. Kagay and L. J. Andrew Villalon (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 1999), discussed saints who appeared and fought alongside Christian forces during the Crusades, as well.

from the miracles of Agnes: "Angelus of Montepulciano, who through a contraction of his nerves was reduced to such a state that he was unable to walk without a certain crutch . . . vowed a pound of wax, and at once *he was returned* to perfect health."[119]

Keeping in mind this complexity in the concept of intercession helps to highlight the magnitude of Beatrice's mother's transformation as she prayed in the local church. Beatrice's mother had, by this point, become an intercessor herself, and had even reinforced her own imitation of the saints by fleeing to a church, underscoring the powerful connection between saints and their *locus* at a shrine, between holiness and place.[120] However, her transformation was achieved not only in her imitation of the intercessory prayer of the saints, but also in that she, like the saints, *succeeded* in obtaining help. Having asked for grace, she received it and acted as a conduit for it. Thus, she too was placed in a position where her contact with divine grace was elided into the suggestion that *she herself* was, at least in part, the source of the miracle. Let us again return to the narrative:

> The which she had not yet finished, when behold the baby girl that she held tightly in her arms recovered the breath of life and looking at her sought its mother's arms. The mother, then, seeing that she had either gained the comfort she desired, or at least was not yet disappointed of it, began to glow with a great warmth of devotion, and to magnify with ever greater courage the divine power. Nor was her motherly anxiety more readily bestowed upon her daughter than the speedy manifestation of God's pity. The mother prayed, the daughter felt relief; nor had the mother yet come to the end of the prayer she had set about making when the daughter received the grace that was asked for. For recovering that very instant her regular breathing she spoke to her mother, albeit with difficult utterance, complaining of the pain she felt . . .[121]

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[119] "De S. Agnete Virgine," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 813: "Angelus de Monte-politiano, per contractionem nervorum ad eum reductus statum, ut nec fulcris quidem juvare gressum posset, & integro mense loquela se privatum cerneret; aliquot cerae libras vovit, & continuo restitutus est pristinae sanitati . . ."

[120] For a thorough discussion of the connection between saint and *locus*, see Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, chapter 1.

[121] Knox and Leslie, ed. and trans., *The Miracles of King Henry VI*, 52–5; or Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 36–7: "Quod sane nondum perfecerat, cum ecce infantula eius brachiis astricta, resumpto vite spiramine, matrem aspiciens quamfamiliariter se reiecit in eam. Mater igitur, cernens opotato se potitam solacio aut certe penitus non frustratam, fervere cepit devocionis ardore et divinam magis magisque animata magnificare potenciam. Unde iteratis dehinc et multiplicatis precibus, augmentatur consequenter et gracia. Nec prompcior fuit in filiam materni affectus sollicitudino quam divine pietatis acceleracio. Itaque precatur illa, relevatur ista. Nec

In the process of describing her intercession and demonstrating her spiritual merits, the authors made Beatrice's mother not only a suppliant, but a conduit of grace. This grace clearly had a transformative power. As if she were herself haloed, she *glowed with a great warmth of devotion*, an image suggesting that her whole being was overheated with grace. Later medieval theologians understood the symptoms of mysticism as just such a case of "spiritual overload," caused when "the 'weaker vessel' of the female body is unable to contain the expansion of the heart when remembering the presence of the Christ within."[122] But the next lines of the miracle story leave the source of this grace unclear. Did healing power come from God, or through a saint, or was it something innate in Beatrice's mother? The clerical scribe presented all of these interpretations at once. The scribe claimed that it was *her* personal qualities and devout prayers that helped to bring on the miracle, in that they *magnified the divine power*. The power was divine, but the magnification was the result of the earthly intercessor's innate holiness.

An unnamed woman in Sweden, in the parish of Folkere, was similarly described as having channeled grace through her own spiritual merits. She woke with her husband one morning to find that their two sons, who had been sleeping in bed with them, were dead. Although her husband was present, he was apparently too horrified to take action; but the woman immediately vowed a pilgrimage if one of the boys were to be restored. "At once his spirit began to enter into his body a little," wrote the clerical scribe, which prompted the mother, "exhilarated," to promise that she would immediately have a mass said in honor of this miracle. Three or four hours later, "the woman, seized by greater faith," asked for her other son's restoration as well, and the second boy also recovered.[123] As in the case of Beatrice Shirley, the narrative described

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illa prius quas ceperat oraciunculas consummavit quam ista quod querebatur acceperit. Namque, refuncta iam tunc anhelitu consueto, lenta licet voce, matrem alloquitur, dolorem scilicet quem senciebat conquesta…"

[122] Nancy Caciola, "Mystics, Demoniacs, and the Physiology of Spirit Possession in Medieval Europe," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 2 (2000), 293–4.

[123] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 157: "Mater vero puerorum in dominam Brigidam habens fiduciam, eo quod audiebat crebro famam miraculorum eius, vouit pro altero dicens: 'O reuerenda domina, si reddideris michi istum viuum, portabo eum ad locum tuum Wastenam cum oblacione.' Cuius spiritus statim cepit in corpus paulatim intrare, sicut solet fieri de morti approximatis paulatim recedere, vnde mater exhylerata dixit: 'Laus omnipotenti Deo et tibi, o domina Brigida, iam vadam ad parrochialem ecclesiam faciamque in honore Dei cantari missam.' Post hec transactis fere tribus uel quatuor horis mulier maiorem in animo capiens fiduciam dixit:

a progression of improvements in the children's health, beginning with small movements and gradually moving towards complete healing, with the mother's urgent prayer and faith speeding the recovery as it unfolded. Also repeated is the image of a woman in a state of spiritual ecstasy as she channeled this power; Beatrice's mother 'burned' or 'glowed,' and the Swedish mother was 'exhilarated.' Intercession, vows, and the receipt of miracles transformed these women into quasi-saints who experienced and channeled grace, and who could bring the proof of that contact with the divine—their healthy children—with them when they became pilgrims.

Beatrice's mother's *imitatio sancti*, however, went so far as to make her body into something resembling a relic, a physical vessel for the grace she magnified and passed on. Specifically, her breast milk became a repository of healing:

> And, when she {Beatrice} had drunk once of her mother's milk, she neither used nor needed any other medicine afterwards, for she was saved only by the grace of the heavenly gift.[124]

Breastfeeding, like pregnancy, tended to be portrayed positively in miracle stories as a result of its practical function. It was an irreplaceable life-giving process, one which, in sustaining all infants, also sustained the fabric of the community and thus affected women and men alike. The authors of the miracles were unambiguous about its importance. St. Yves, for example, replenished the breast milk of a woman whose infant was starving because her milk had dried up.[125] Further, effective breast-feeding functioned as incontrovertible evidence of health in miracles that described the recoveries of infants and small children. The very young could not speak or walk as a demonstration of their improved health; nursing was the only immediate signal of their wholeness that they could provide. An arresting example of this powerful nonverbal sign of well-being appears in the case of two-year old Boethius, who

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'O gloriosa domina, scio, quia potens es apud Altissimum, et jstum adhuc jacentem mortuum redde michi viuum, sicut reddidisti alium.' Qui statim eodem modo quo prior viuificatus est."

[124] Knox and Leslie, ed. and trans., *The Miracles of King Henry VI*, 52–5; or Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 36–7: "At illa, hausto semel ex ubere lacte materno, reconvalescere perhibetur, nec alio quidem medicamento postac vel usa est vel indiguit. Gracia enim sola superni muneris sospes efficitur."

[125] "De s. Yvo Presbytero Trecorii," *Acta Sanctorum*, May IV, 565.

had swallowed a nail. When his mother prayed to Birgitta, he "at once began to suck his mother's breasts with a happy face."[126]

But in the case of Beatrice Shirley, breastfeeding—and hence mothers—was presented as a source of grace. Breastfeeding did not serve as proof of her return to life; the proof of her recovery came earlier, when she spoke, complaining of pain. Instead, in this story breastfeeding functioned as a method of miraculous healing. After contact with her mother's milk, Beatrice was fully recovered, and in the words of the scribe, "no *other* medicine was necessary (emphasis mine)," suggesting that the milk itself was the medicine. Hence, the *imitatio sancti* that had begun when her mother sought sacred space and made an intercessory appeal was completed. The intercession successful, her body became a repository of grace, just like the relics of the saints. And, like the saints who cured the illnesses of those who touched or kissed their relics, Beatrice's mother passed that healing grace along to her daughter through the physical contact between them.

Hints of a similar connection between breast milk and healing appear in a few other miracles. One mother whose infant had died after refusing the breast for eight days made a pilgrimage vow to St. Yves, and the child revived and cried out. The mother immediately put it to the breast, "and that boy sucked milk from the said breast, and *after that* the said little one recovered (emphasis mine)."[127] The case of Joan Eastmond, whose intercessory plea to King Henry VI saved her year-old daughter from starvation after a grain got stuck in the child's throat, treated breastfeeding in a similar fashion. The child refused to eat or to nurse because of the foreign object, and after her mother's pilgrimage vow to Henry, the child spat up the grain, and "she therefore from that time subsisted both on her mother's milk and on ordinary vegetables, returning *in a short time* not only to her former state of health but to a better one (emphasis mine)."[128] Once again,

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[126] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 70: "Cernens autem infantem in proximo moriturum portauit eum in capellam iam circumuolutis oculis spirare non valentem, et pro eo dominam Brigidam humiliter jnuocabat, qua orante ferrum disparuit, et infans cepit mammillas sugere maternas leto uultu."

[127] Campbell, ed., *Enquête pour les process de canonization de Dauphine de Puimichel*, 84: "…et ipse puer suxit lac de dicta mamma; et exinde dictus parvulus convaluit, et sanus et vivus fuit…"

[128] Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 22: "Illa igitur dehinc tum materni lactis tum nutrimenti communis vegetata subsidio, non solum pristinum sed et melioris incolumitatis statum brevi tempore recuperavit."

the mother's milk intervenes between an early phase of recovery and perfect health. Whether the collaborative authors understood that full recovery followed breastfeeding in these cases because the children had not been eating, or because the milk itself was thought a vehicle of grace, is not entirely clear. However, as the restoration was not complete until nursing had occurred, the milk served as an agent of healing, and hence the mothers' bodies were conduits of healing.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the height of Marian devotion, no pattern of motherly intervention, breastfeeding, and caregiving could fail to recall the Virgin Mary. In many cases, the pattern I have noted here amongst female intercessors could be read not so much an *imitatio sancti* as an *imitatio mariae*—a brand of imitation with which many female saints were also associated.[129] By the high Middle Ages, Mary herself, like other saints, had been cast by theologians in the role of an imitator of Christ.[130] All of these women, then—Mary, other female saints, and female pilgrims alike—are understood to be engaging in actions which are acceptable because they are patterned on the life of a sacred figure. Furthermore, like Mary, whose body acted as a vessel for Christ's entry into the world, these female pilgrims could be interpreted as 'empty vessels' to be filled with grace—passive conduits rather than active players in events.[131] Women whose stories encompass lactation reiterated the Marian function of conduit or mediatrix in a physical sense. But perhaps most significantly, the cult of the Virgin relied heavily on breast milk as a relic. Vials of the Virgin's milk were believed to be held at many Marian shrines, including at Walsingham.[132] Such oblique references to the Virgin Mary appear occasionally in maternal contexts other than breastfeeding, as well. The pilgrimage of a pregnant woman might also be justified by including a description of the birth which was similar to that experienced by the Virgin. For example, two of the women seeking help in parturition not only received miracles (through Birgitta and Yves respectively) but in fact were blessed with painless and

[129] Catherine M. Mooney, "*Imitatio Christi* or *Imitatio Mariae?* Claire of Assisi and Her Interpreters," in *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*, ed. Mooney (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 52–77.

[130] Mooney, "*Imitatio Christi* or *Imitatio Mariae*," 68.

[131] Mooney, "*Imitatio Christi* or *Imitatio Mariae*," 69.

[132] Susan Signe Morrison, *Women Pilgrims in Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 2000), 23 and 32.

(in one case) bloodless deliveries.[133] This painless and blood-free labor was the ideal that informed many images of the Nativity in the later Middle Ages, including the vision of the Nativity received by Birgitta of Sweden upon her pilgrimage to Bethlehem.[134]

Beatrice's mother promised to become pilgrim, then, under circumstances that combined her role as mother and caregiver with evidence of her personal righteousness, and which demanded that she honor a miracle born of Henry VI's power, but also of her own.[135]

> After not many days had passed, that little woman arranged to hurry to Windsor Castle, not so much because she was bound by a vow as because she was moved by gratitude for God's grace; bringing along with her both her offspring and three stalks of grain, she entered under the walls, and because of her devotion she honored the resting place of the holy body by piling up gifts for it. And next, with the sacraments having been given to herself and at the same time to those who were approaching nearest, to Christ's glory she proclaimed the truth of the deed in the order given above, to many bystanders.

Several things about the pilgrimage of thanksgiving undertaken by Beatrice and her mother are noteworthy in light of trends in the collections overall. The first of these is that while the author lists both the child and the gift Beatrice's mother brought with her, there is no mention of Beatrice's father having made the pilgrimage; just as it was her mother who made the vow and her mother's devotion that helped to bring on the miracle, it was her mother who offered thanks for Beatrice's recovery. Of further interest is the author's attempt to soften the mother's agency as a vow-maker. The scribe literally belittles her, calling her by the diminutive *muliercula*; and then he shifts the nature of her motivation for the pilgrimage, saying that she was not forced to come by her own vow but was instead spiritually moved to

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[133] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 160; and "De s. Yvo Presbytero Trecorii," *Acta Sanctorum*, May IV, 565.

[134] See Birgitta of Sweden, *Revelaciones*, ed. Birger Bergh (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1967) Book 7, Chapter 21.

[135] Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma*, 22–3: "Nec multis post transactis diebus muliercula illa, non tam voto astricta quam facte propiciacionis gracia permota, castello de Wynsore properare disposuit, secumque et suam sobolem et aristellam tria adhuc grana retinentem deferens, menia subintravit, sacrati corporis repausorium devotis cumulando muneribus honoravit, ac datis deinde et sui et simul adveniencium proximorum sacramentis, geste rei veritatem, ordine quo supra, astantibus plurimis ad Christi preconium declaravit." Translation is the author's own.

devotion by the miracle, which suggests that her travel was God's will, rather than her own decision. Finally, here we catch a glimpse of her public proclamation of the miracle in front of 'many bystanders.' Her public appearance was justified by the presence of her living child, a visible token of her laudable role as maternal caregiver and also of the miracle, and an equally visible gift, both of which were presented with proper reverence for saint and sacrament. Though she was called a *muliercula*, throughout both crisis and pilgrimage, Beatrice's mother remained firmly center-stage, publicly acting as a decisive, effective, and holy intermediary between her family and the divine.

Conclusions

Medieval women were understood by at least some of their contemporaries as flawed creatures in need of constant monitoring, whose unsupervised wandering lead only to sin and to shame. This, of course, assumed that it was wandering they undertook for their own pleasure; but if their motives were appropriate to women, their travels could be as well. Even *exempla* bear this out. The *Alphabetum Narrationum* tells of a woman who left her husband because she was being repeatedly and aggressively propositioned by her husband's brother, and wandering was the only way she could avoid a situation that, as the author pointed out, could "cause him and his brother, her husband, to be at debate."[136] Matidiana suffered terribly during her twenty years of self-imposed exile, losing her sons in a shipwreck and enduring paralysis of the hands, which left her a beggar. Her virtuous wandering was eventually rewarded when she was reunited with the family she thought she had lost.

Miracle stories frequently describe situations where pilgrimage might be undertaken for properly feminine reasons, and we have at least some reason to believe that these stories, especially in the later Middle Ages, were grounded in actual events. Those stories which were preserved often featured female protagonists. These heroines' troubles reflected the known boundaries of female biology and of day-to-day life in the Middle Ages, as they sought the saints for help with their own chronic illnesses or parturition troubles. The boundaries of culture—the

[136] *Alphabet*, 101: "…for to cauce hym & his bruther, hur husbond, to be at debate."

desire *not* to be interpreted within satiric tropes about women who wandered—meant that they sought this help in ways that emphasized the duration and seriousness of their suffering, and underplayed their agency in the bargains they struck with the saints. But in many such stories, one of the most fundamental aspects of medieval femininity—that of caregiving—provided the best and most justifiable reason for a woman to become a pilgrim. Hence, women's pilgrimages, as often as not, served the needs of others. In these circumstances, when a pilgrimage was an extension of a woman's normative duties rather than an abandonment of them, there was no need to underplay a woman's decision to become a pilgrim, and the sorts of problems she sought to address were no longer limited to the most long-lasting or painful. Her service to her children, household, and community in these stories was reason enough, and her pilgrimage no longer required such cautious presentation.

The collaborative authors of miracles stories treated caregiving female pilgrims with something more than tolerance. A woman who succeeded in obtaining a miracle for her child had both access to divine grace, and acted as a vessel or a conduit for it. In some cases, her prayers or her holiness, like those of a saint, actually determined the magnitude or effectiveness of that grace. In others, her very body, like those of the saints, became a repository of healing power. Having had contact with this grace, these intercessory pilgrims, like the saints they imitated, became worthy of respect and praise—in the very same miracle stories whose ostensible purpose was to praise the dead intercessor, not the living one.

Such women, as they were inscribed in these stories by a collaborative authorship, were more than just iterations of a different, more positive literary trope. Their stories arise from the experiences of real women who took real pilgrimages, and were repeated for the benefit of a Christian laity that consisted of real men and women who were potential pilgrims themselves. As such, this evidence suggests considerably broader possibilities for women's devotional practice than satire alone would imply. While a medieval woman might have known that she faced serious resistance to any request to travel, she also knew that pilgrimage could successfully be portrayed as an essential part of her duties as a caregiver. The large numbers of women in these miracle stories, women whose pilgrimages had to have been verifiable in order for the stories to serve their purposes in the canonization process, attest to the fact that warnings against pilgrimages taken by women did not

pose an insurmountable obstacle. Instead, the multivocal discourse about pilgrimage (in which pilgrims themselves were active participants) and the flexibility of the rituals of pilgrimage, lent themselves to a surprisingly varied interpretation of women's participation in the practice. As we shall see, some women were willing to navigate through these fragmentary responses in order to attain highly personal goals.

CHAPTER FOUR

"STRONGER THAN MEN AND BRAVER THAN KNIGHTS:" WOMEN AND DEVOTIONAL PILGRIMAGE

Despite the doubts of some medieval authors about the sincerity and probity of female pilgrims, a woman's actions and devotion might be celebrated if her daily role as a caregiver led her to undertake a pilgrimage to a saint's shrine.[1] However, other kinds of pilgrimage did not dovetail so neatly with feminine responsibilities. In particular, pilgrimages to places such as Jerusalem and Rome were not intended to confer miraculous healing or other tangible benefits either upon pilgrims or upon those for whom pilgrims acted as intercessors. Instead, these strictly devotional pilgrimages offered Christians the opportunity to win indulgences that would shorten their time in purgatory, and to visit both the places and the people described in the New Testament.[2] Pilgrims spent significant time and money and took considerable personal risks in pursuit of these intangible goals. Women encountered less tolerant responses to their presence on such pilgrimages, where they could not easily claim that their travels were an outgrowth of their household duties, and where they might be away for months and even years—if they returned at all.

Both qualitative and quantitative evidence suggests that women were enthusiastic pilgrims in the later Middle Ages, and I have argued that women comprised a significant proportion of pilgrims whose claims to have experienced a miracle were recorded.[3] But at least one scholar

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[1] An earlier version of this chapter was published under the title "'Stronger than men and braver than knights': women and the pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Rome in the later middle ages," *Journal of Medieval History* 29 (2003): 153–175. Reprinted by permission from Elsevier.

[2] Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record, Event, 1000–1215* (London: Scholar Press, 1982), 124.

[3] Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowan and Littlefield, 1975), p. 262, suggests that it "is possible that at the close of the Middle Ages women formed the majority of visitors at many shrines;" Josephie Brefeld, *A Guidebook for the Jerusalem Pilgrimage in the Late Middle Ages: A Case for Computer-aided Textual Criticism* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994), 15, notes that a figure of one-quarter to one-third female pilgrims has been suggested.

has claimed that the Jerusalem pilgrimage was "virtually reserved for the male sex."[4] The writings of later medieval pilgrims show that this judgment is not entirely accurate; women did engage in devotional pilgrimage, traveling to far-off places for the good of their souls rather than the welfare of their families. Women had been traveling to Jerusalem for religious reasons since the late Antique,[5] and negative commentary about them, a sure sign of their presence, was standard by the eighth century.[6] By the later Middle Ages, the Venetian senate repeatedly granted the right to ship captains to carry large numbers of pilgrims of both genders to Jerusalem.[7] While specific counts of men and women on the Venetian pilgrim-galleys to Jerusalem are impossible because of the destruction by fire of the pertinent records, we do know something of the numbers by looking at the infrastructure of Jerusalem itself. There were enough female pilgrims in Jerusalem that they required a separate dormitory near the main pilgrims' hospitals in Jerusalem, "another great hall, wherein women were wont to sojourn since they were on no account permitted to live with men in the great hospital."[8] Meanwhile, women were enough of a presence at pilgrimage shrines in Rome to have been specifically barred from some of the shrines there and lampooned in sermons and pilgrimage guides.[9]

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[4] See Maribel Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims; Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World A.D. 300–800* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005). See also Brefeld, *A Guidebook for the Jerusalem*, 15.

[5] Patricia A. Halpin, "Anglo-Saxon Women and Pilgrimage," in *Anglo-Norman Studies XIX. Proceedings of the Battle Conference*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill (Suffolk: Boydell, 1996), 96–122.

[6] Giles Constable, "Opposition to Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages," in *Religious Life and Thought (11th–12th centuries): Collected Essays of Giles Constable*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, 89 (London: Variorum Reprints, 1979), 127, 131.

[7] See a number of examples in M. Margaret Newett, introduction to *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Year 1494* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1907), 36–39.

[8] This translation, and all those used in-text here, is from Felix Fabri, "The Wanderings of Felix Fabri," trans. Aubrey Stewart, in *The Library of the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society* vols. 7–10 (New York: AMS Press, 1971), vols. 7–8, 395. The Latin text is available as "Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Aegypti Peregrinationem," ed. C. D. Hassler, in *Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart* vols. I–III (Stuttgart: Kosten des Literarischen Vereins, 1843), vol. II, 318: "Juxta eandem domum erat alia curia magna, in qua manere solebant foeminae peregrinae, quae viris in hospitali magno cohabitare minime permittebantur."

[9] On the banning of women from shrines, see John Capgrave, *Ye Solace of Pilgrimes. A Description of Rome, circa A.D. 1450, by John Capgrave, an Austin Friar of King's Lynn*, ed. C. A. Mills (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), p. 77. For examples of satire, see Giordano da Rivalto, *Prediche del Beato Fra Giordano da Rivalto dell'Ordine dè Predicatori*

Based on such evidence, it seems that any assumption of women's absence on long-distance, devotional pilgrimages stems less from historical reality than from the rarity of direct accounts of their experiences. For this reason, perhaps, few scholars have discussed women's long-distance pilgrimages in the later Middle Ages. Many scholars of pilgrimage have simply noted women's presence on such journeys without fully examining their experiences.[10] Patricia A. Halpin has provided a fuller examination of the pilgrimages of Anglo-Saxon women, noting as she did that the sources for later medieval women are more vibrant;[11] nevertheless, the later medieval sources have been neglected. Kristine Utterback and Sylvia Schein have discussed the correspondence between the visions and the pilgrimages of Margery Kempe and Bridget of Sweden.[12] And Susan Signe Morrison's study of female pilgrims in later medieval England used archival sources to demonstrate that women planned for pilgrimages to Jerusalem, but only discussed the actual process of pilgrimages whose destinations lay within England.[13]

The mere presence of women on long-distance devotional pilgrimages, however, does not indicate that the journeys were easily available to them. The tradition of misogynist complaint made women's participation in such pilgrimages an especially challenging goal. Women found it difficult to justify such great fiscal sacrifice for an endeavor that, unlike miraculous pilgrimages, did not overtly fulfill their quotidian duties as caregivers to others or restore them as vital components of the household. As such, they faced significant barriers to becoming pilgrims in the first place, and their fellow-pilgrims had little need of or welcome for them once those barriers were overcome. But while it was expectations about their household roles that made such pilgrimages difficult for women, it was to those same roles that they appealed

(Florence: Stamperia di P. G. Viviani, 1739), 253, who mocks women pilgrims in his sermon on Luke 18:9–14; and again Capgrave, *Ye Solace of Pilgrimes*, 77, who discusses women's excessive desire to go to Rome as pilgrims.

[10] See, for example, Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 260–63; Diana Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West* (London, J. B. Tauris, 1999), 236–8.

[11] Halpin, "Anglo-Saxon Women and Pilgrimage," 97.

[12] Kristine Utterback, "The Vision Becomes Reality: Medieval Women Pilgrims to the Holy Land," in *Pilgrims and Travelers to the Holy Land*, ed. Bryan F. LeBeau and Menachem Mor (Omaha: Creighton University Press, 1996), 159–68; Sylvia Schein, "Bridget of Sweden, Margery Kempe, and Women's Jerusalem Pilgrimages in the Middle Ages," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 14, no. 1 (1999): 44–58.

[13] Susan Signe Morrison, *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England: Private Piety as Public Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

in order to shield and justify themselves during the journey. Thus the history of women on long-distance pilgrimages is, as Judith Bennett has commented on the history of medieval women more generally, "in part a history of the constraints of economic disadvantage, familial duty, and prescribed social roles. But it is also in part a history of women's agency within and against these constraints."[14]

The Sources

This chapter will investigate women's experiences of devotional pilgrimages as they were recorded in some twenty-five pilgrimage accounts, written primarily by men, between 1300 and 1500. Pilgrims, especially those who traveled to the Holy Lands, had been recording their experiences since at least the fourth century. Before the twelfth century, pilgrims' accounts tended to be more guidebook than diary, listing each shrine one ought to visit, the indulgences available there, the relics on display, and the prayers that ought to be said in each location. These guidebooks, called itineraries, were a common form of literature, and were copied and recopied in essentially the same format. According to Sumption, "most of their topographical information was derived from the seventh-century writings of Bede and Adamnan," and they were "condensed, factual, and turgid."[15]

By the fourteenth century, however, pilgrimage accounts had changed significantly, in tandem with changes in the Jerusalem pilgrimage itself. The commercial success of the high Middle Ages had created a middle class whose members were more likely to have the fiscal means to travel.[16] They were also more likely to be literate, and as literacy became more common in the high Middle Ages, books like Mandeville's *Travels* sparked further interest in far-off places. With greater wealth and greater interest in travel came greater numbers of pilgrims; and as a result the Jerusalem pilgrimage began to take on the attributes of tourism. "Official arrangements were now made

[14] Judith M. Bennett, introduction to *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages*, ed. Judith M. Bennett, Elizabeth A. Clark, Jean F. O'Barr, B. Anne Vilen, and Sarah Westphal-Wihl (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 6.

[15] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 257.

[16] Clarissa W. Atkinson, *Mystic and Pilgrim: The Book and the World of Margery Kempe* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 52.

for tourists for the first time. Information offices appear at Rome and consulates in Egypt and Palestine. The Venetian package tour is at the height of its popularity. Governments begin to encourage tourism."[17] The combination of tourism, literacy, and curiosity encouraged more written records of individual pilgrim experiences. Some took the form of diaries, listing the important events of their journeys day by day; others took older, locale-based itineraries as a template and filled in personal observations about each of the shrines. These later medieval diarists often took an interest in details that did not necessarily relate to the ritual or spiritual process of pilgrimage. For example, authors of a noble background, such as the German knight Arnold von Harff, carefully assessed the wealth and military strength of the towns they visited; Italian traders such as Gucci and Frescobaldi commented extensively on the trade goods available in various places; and some authors went on at length about the physical discomforts of travel, including heat, hunger, and seasickness.[18] The authors vary in their level of interest in their fellow pilgrims. Some, such as von Harff, rarely mentioned any details about the group of people with whom they traveled. Others, like the German friar Felix Fabri, recorded many details about the shrines and about those visiting them, and thus are far richer for the purposes of this study.

I have examined twenty-five narratives, written by English, German, Italian, French, and Spanish pilgrims. Almost all the narratives discuss the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and a few also include descriptions of pilgrimage to Rome and even to Santiago de Compostela. Using these narratives to describe the experiences of female pilgrims, however, is a delicate business. Without exception, the pilgrimage narratives were written by male hands. Hence, the experiences of women must be read through a layer of interpretation imposed by male pilgrims and authors. But since, in most cases, women seem to have been a minority in any group of Jerusalem pilgrims, the attitudes and interpretations of men were a powerful force that shaped their day-to-day experiences. Furthermore, female pilgrims do not appear in all of the narratives, nor even in the majority of them, although attitudes *about* female pilgrims make an appearance in most of them. While most of the texts

[17] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 259.

[18] For more on the insertion of the pilgrim-author's individual experience in the text, see Elke Weber, *Traveling Through Text: Message and Method in Late Medieval Pilgrimage Accounts* (New York: Routledge, 2005), Ch. 3, 77–107.

do not dwell on women, their personal perceptions, or their emotional experiences during pilgrimages, they do allow us to make some sense of the milieu in which those pilgrimages were carried out.

Two narratives in particular offer detailed information about specific women who went to Jerusalem as pilgrims. The first is *The Book of Margery Kempe*.[19] Margery was the daughter of a merchant of King's Lynn, Norfolk; she married, had sixteen children, and was the proprietor of several failed businesses. Despite these mundane commitments, Kempe was anything but typical. She understood herself to be a visionary, having regular conversations with Christ and the Virgin Mary. She tried to include aspects of monastic living in her middle-class urban life, persuading her husband to live in celibacy with her and abstaining from meat and alcohol. Later in her life, she dictated a book about her spiritual development and her visions to two different clerical scribes. But she also went on pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem in 1413–15, and is the only medieval woman to have preserved her observations about the journey.[20]

Kempe's extraordinary affective piety makes her *Book* a complicated source. Because she was assertive and even brash about her special spiritual status, many of those around her thought her mentally ill rather than a living saint, and this leaves us to decipher how much of her experience was shaped by her gender alone, and how much by her unusual behavior. The *Book* is further complicated as a source because of her illiteracy: where, in this text, is the authentic Margery? John C. Hirsch argued that we should take the scribes seriously as authors who had control over the text;[21] Lynn Staley suggested that the Margery

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[19] Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. and trans. Lynn Staley (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2001); the Middle English text is available in Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Sanford Brown Meech (London: Early English Text Society, 1940).

[20] The *Liber Celestis* of St. Bridget of Sweden, the only other later medieval pilgrimage narrative that was dictated by a woman, does not contain information about Bridget's participation in pilgrimage rituals, her interactions with fellow-pilgrims, or her experiences of travel; instead, it records the visions she had while in Jerusalem. Because of this, the text sheds little light on women's experiences of pilgrimage as they are addressed here. In the words of her editor, "Most of what we know of the Saint in the *Liber* we learn from the words addressed to her by the divine speakers: and their messages only apply in the most general terms to her personal situation." Roger Ellis, introduction to *The Liber Celestis of Bridget of Sweden* Vol. 1, ed. Roger Ellis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), xiv.

[21] John C. Hirsch, "Author and Scribe in the *Book of Margery Kempe*," *Medium Aevum* 44 (1975): 145–150.

of the *Book*, as a literary creation, should be treated as distinct from Kempe, the author;[22] Felicity Riddy argues for a textual hybrid of scribe and dictator that ultimately belongs to neither;[23] nonetheless, many others have commented on the power of Margery's authentic personality as she roars, cries, cajoles, and preaches her way through the text.[24] As we shall see, her interpretations of the events of her pilgrimage were so earthy, so reproachful, and so vehement that it is difficult to believe that they have been significantly modulated by the scribes' perceptions. Although one woman (and in particular, a woman as unique as Margery) can hardly be made to speak for all women, comparisons to other sources demonstrate that many of Margery's experiences mirrored those of other female pilgrims.

A second invaluable source on female pilgrims to Jerusalem and Rome is the journal of Dominican friar, preacher, and reformer, Felix Fabri, who went on pilgrimage from his home in Ulm to Jerusalem twice between 1480 and 1483.[25] Fabri was a chatty, attentive, and partisan observer of his fellow-pilgrims and of foreign cultures alike. His book, the *Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti Peregrinationem*, is a gold mine of information on all aspects of the Jerusalem pilgrimage.[26] Fabri recorded the presence of women on each of his pilgrimages and commented extensively on their behavior and their relationships with their fellow-travelers.

The remaining twenty-three narratives offer brief glimpses of female pilgrims, alongside a plethora of small details about women's participation in the process and the opinions about them held by their male

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[22] Lynn Staley, *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

[23] Felicity Riddy, "Text and Self in *The Book of Margery Kempe*," in *Voices in Dialogue: Reading Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lina Olson and Katheryn Kirby-Fulton (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 435–453.

[24] Robert Karl Stone, *Middle English Prose Style: Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich* (The Hague: Mouton, 1970); Karma Lochrie, "*The Book of Margery Kempe*: The Marginal Woman's Quest for Literary Authority," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 16, no. 1 (1986): 33–56; and Nicolas Watson, "The Making of the *Book of Margery Kempe*," in *Voices in Dialogue*, ed. Olson and Kirby-Fulton, 395–434.

[25] On Fabri as preacher and reformer, see Jacob Klingner, "*Just say happily: 'Felix said so,' and you'll be in the clear*: Felix Fabri OP (1440–1502) Preaching Monastic Reform to Nuns," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 46 (2002): 42–56.

[26] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 –10; and 'Evagatorium,' vol. I–III. H. F. M. Prescott discussed his journeys in depth in *Jerusalem Journey: Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1954) and *Once to Sinai: The Further Pilgrimage of Friar Felix Fabri* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1957).

counterparts. Whenever possible, observations based upon the experiences of Kempe and Fabri will be supplemented by the writings of these other pilgrims, who came from all over Europe and from diverse social backgrounds. Although their far-flung origins may have given them differing viewpoints, all of then had in common the experience of travel to Jerusalem, and hence their opinions and observations are a fair representation of the social milieu braved by female pilgrims as they made their way to the Holy Lands and to Rome.

Becoming a Pilgrim: Gender, Canon Law, and Social Strategies

Becoming a pilgrim, especially to Jerusalem or Rome, was a serious commitment for later medieval Europeans. It entailed an investment of both money and time, and willingness to place one's physical and spiritual well-being at risk outside the safety of one's home community. For this reason, pilgrimage was regarded as a penitential and sacrificial act, and thus one did not vow a pilgrimage to Jerusalem lightly. Such vows, like those made to the saints, were considered a binding commitment, breakable only in favor of monastic vows.[27] Women and men alike faced barriers to joining this select group, but the difficulties women faced, and hence their strategies for overcoming them, were unique.

Theoretically, women had the same right as men to engage in any devotional activity, since both doctrine and canon law held that the souls of men and women were of equal importance in the eyes of God.[28] For this reason, the legal status of pilgrim was gender-neutral. Those who took up a long pilgrimage were "distinguished from other men (*sic*) by a uniform and a solemn ritual of initiation."[29] Neither the clothing specific to pilgrims (a floppy, broad-brimmed hat, a traveler's bag or *scrip*, and a staff) nor the initiation ceremony distinguished between male and female pilgrims.[30] Further, male and female pilgrims had the same legal rights.

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[27] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 138–40; on monastic vows, see Constable, "Opposition to Pilgrimage," 123–46, esp. 135–6.

[28] See Patricia Ranft, *Women and Spiritual Equality in Christian Tradition*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), esp. Ch. 10; also Linda E. Mitchell, "Women and Medieval Canon Law," in *Women in Medieval Western European Culture*, ed. Mitchell (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1999), 152.

[29] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 171.

[30] On pilgrim clothing, see Anja Grebe, "Pilgrims and Fashion: The Functions of Pilgrims' Garments," in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and*

The legal status of pilgrims in canon and, to some extent, civil law was based in their classification as *miserabiles personae*, or persons who were suffering. Widows also fell into the category of *miserabiles personae*.[31] As beleaguered travelers and strangers, pilgrims and other *miserabiles personae* were owed the kindness and support of all Christians. Pilgrims could seek personal protection from harm and hospitality from any bishop, abbot, or other churchman, and civil authorities were to refrain from taxing pilgrims or arresting them.[32] Pilgrims' property and service as vassals were also immune from claims, and "there was no legal remedy to be had against a bona fide pilgrim, so long as he returned home to face his adversaries within a reasonable time."[33] None of these protections were qualified by gender.

Based on this seeming legal and spiritual equality, it is easy to lose sight of, or to set aside, the individual situation of pilgrims who sought Jerusalem and Rome. The concept of *communitas* advanced by Turner and Turner followed this logic.[34] But such a one-size-fitted-all approach does not suit the evidence left to us describing real or imagined female pilgrims. Duffy's conception of corporate Christianity, which reproduced and reinforced a community's quotidian social hierarchy, applies well to what we have seen in the localized pilgrimages to the shrines of miracle-working saints; miracle cults did make a particular place for female pilgrims based upon their function within the family unit.[35] But interpretations of pilgrimage as a process which tended to erode social hierarchy, or to clothe that hierarchy in Christian cooperation,

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the British Isles, ed. Sarah Blick and Rita Tekippe (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 3–27; Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 172–73. On liturgy, see James A. Brundage, "Cruce Signari: The Rite for Taking the Cross in England," *Traditio* 22 (1966): 289–310; Derek A. Rivard, "*Pro Iter Agentibus*: the ritual blessings of pilgrims and their insignia in a pontifical of southern Italy," *Journal of Medieval History* 27 (2001): 365–398; for one version of that liturgy, see J. Wickham Legg, ed., *The Sarum Missal Edited From Three Early Manuscripts* (Oxford: John Hamilton Ltd., 1969), 452.

[31] James A. Brundage, "Widows as Disadvantaged Persons in Medieval Canon Law," in *Upon My Husband's Death: Widows in the Literature and Histories of Medieval Europe*, ed. Louise Mirrer (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 193–206, 194.

[32] James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 12–15.

[33] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 170.

[34] Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 13–15. Turner and Turner are supported in this contention by Kristine Utterback, "Saints and Sinners on the Same Journey: Pilgrimage as Ritual Process," *Medieval Perspectives* 15, no. 1 (2000): 123.

[35] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 131.

cannot fully explain the reaction of devotional pilgrims to the women in their midst. Issues of gender (or of class) did not vanish, or even mute themselves, when a woman took up the scrip and staff and headed for Jerusalem. Instead, the stressful conditions of long-distance travel and cultural displacement replayed and even amplified the social divisions amongst pilgrims, who clung fiercely to their previous identities. In that context, women, who could not as easily find justification for devotional pilgrimage in the caregiving aspect of their quotidian role as they did for miraculous pilgrimage, endured a strong, negative reaction to their presence.

This, of course, assumes that women were able to undertake the journey in the first place. It is clear that many did, but many more may have been thwarted by the practical barriers women had to overcome in order to achieve the status of devotional pilgrim. The first barrier was a matter of class, rather than gender: in order to take on the legal status of a pilgrim and embark on the road to Jerusalem or Rome, women, like all pilgrims, had to obtain the economic resources needed to pay for the journey. In the case of the Jerusalem pilgrimage, the issue of economic resources was difficult for all pilgrims, regardless of their gender. During the fourteenth century, the average payment to the galley-captain alone was 60 Venetian ducats; even the half-fare they sometimes charged the poor was "a sum well beyond the means of most 'poor pilgrims.'"[36] As a result, neither women nor men on long-distance pilgrimages represented a broad cross-section of medieval society. Instead, those who could afford the journey were of noble or affluent backgrounds, were the paid attendants of such wealthy pilgrims, or were members of religious orders and were supported in the endeavor by charity.[37] Margery Kempe, the owner of a number of failed businesses who lived on charitable donations while a pilgrim in Rome, was perhaps the poorest female pilgrim to figure in the narratives. But even she was of a comfortable background: she was the daughter of a merchant who was sufficiently powerful to have been mayor of King's Lynn, and she was married to a "worshipful burgess."[38] Felix Fabri

[36] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 205.

[37] For a discussion of class and class expectations on the Jerusalem pilgrimage, see Katheryne Beebe, "Knights, Cooks, Monks and Tourists: Elite and Popular Experience of the Late-Medieval Jerusalem Pilgrimage," *Studies in Church History* 42 (2006), 99–109.

[38] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, Chapter 1, 6; also *Book*, ed. Meech, 6: "…sche was maryed to a worschepful burgeys…"

called the six "ancient ladies" who joined one of his two pilgrimages "wealthy;" but he also made clear that they were not noble, suggesting that they, like Kempe, were of the urban merchant elite.[39] In a similar vein, Fabri described a 'Fleming' woman who traveled with her husband.[40] They could both afford to go, were not identified as noble, and were from heavily urbanized Flanders, and so it is probably safe to assume that they, too were of the merchant class. The remaining female pilgrims appearing in these records are noblewomen: Margery records a Madam Florentine traveling with a large retinue that included knights and gentlewomen,[41] and Fabri briefly records the presence of a noblewoman on one of his pilgrimages.[42]

A woman must not only have had the economic resources to become a pilgrim, she must also have permission to use those resources. Women faced particularly challenging obstacles in obtaining this permission. All pilgrims, regardless of gender, had to seek the permission of everyone with some claim upon their services or supervisory power over them, such as feudal lords, spouses (to excuse them from the marital debt), parish priests, abbots or bishops.[43] This list of permissions held for women as well, but was made more difficult by the legal power of husband over wife and father over daughter.[44] As such, the number and strength of potential barriers to a woman's pilgrimage depended upon her status in the sexual economy. Unmarried young women, for example, would theoretically have need the permission of their fathers, but no such woman appeared in the narratives under examination here. Their absence is probably significant; the expected niche for young women with high spiritual goals was the cloister, not the road to Jerusalem. Meanwhile, women religious were rarely granted the freedom to travel from the cloister by their abbess; this could be a difficult matter even for male religious.[45] Indeed, the interest of at least one nun in the Holy Land was fulfilled not by wandering, but by the writings of her brother,

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[39] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 11; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 31.

[40] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vols. 7 & 8, 166; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 149: "Inter quos erat quidam Flandrensis cum sua uxore intrans galeam."

[41] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, Chapter 31, 58; also *Book*, Meech, 79.

[42] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vols. 7 & 8, 41; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 56.

[43] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 170.

[44] Margaret Wade LeBarge, *A Small Sound of the Trumpet: Women in Medieval Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 33–35.

[45] Felix Fabri commented on his difficulties and fears in obtaining permission; see Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7, 48–9. See also Constable, "Opposition to Pilgrimage," 131.

Francesco Suriano, who wrote a descriptive Jerusalem itinerary in order to provide her with the devotional benefits of the pilgrimage without the travel that was "impossible" for her.[46] Married women needed permission from their husbands, both as their legal guardians and as their sexual partners; the onus of the marital debt lay equally on men and women, and so a husband's refusal of permission represented a nearly insurmountable obstacle.[47] Only widows could have made such a decision without the interference of a male relative, but even they needed the permission of their parish priest.

Still, the women who appeared in pilgrimage narratives found ways to obtain permission, using such strategies as bargaining with their husbands, traveling with their husbands, or awaiting widowhood. We are fortunate enough to have a record of Margery Kempe's experiences as she sought permission to travel. She felt that her call to become a pilgrim was not a matter of curiosity or even innate desire, but was instead divinely inspired. As such, she was confident that God sanctioned her desire to travel. Her record of her own departure made the matter seem very simple:

> When the time came that this creature [Margery] should visit the holy places where our Lord was quick and dead,…she prayed the parish priest of the town where she was dwelling to say for her in the pulpit that if any man or woman claimed any debt of her husband or of her, they should come and speak with her before she went and she, with the help of God, would make compensation to each of them so that they should hold themselves content. And so she did. Afterward she took her leave of her husband and the holy anchorite…[48]

Here, Kempe, a married woman, provided a list of people to whom she owed obligations or allegiance: those to whom she owed money,

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[46] Suriano, *Treatise on the Holy Land*, trans. Theophilus Bellorini and Eugene Hoade (1949; rpr. Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1983), 110.

[47] Brundage, "Sexual Equality in Medieval Canon Law," in *Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History*, ed. Joel T. Rosenthal (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1990), 67.

[48] Kempe, *Book*, Staley, trans., Chapter 26, 44–45; also *Book*, ed. Meech, 60: "Whan tyme cam þat þis creatur xuld vysiten þo holy placys wher owyr Lord was whyk & ded, as sche had be reuelacyon ȝerys a-forn, sche preyd þe parysch preste of þe town þer sche was dwellyng to sey for hir in þe pulpyt þat, yf any man er woman þat cleymyd any dette of hir hosband or of hir þei xuld come & speke wyth hir er sche went, & sche with þe help of God, xulde makyn a-seth to ech of hem þat þei schuldyn heldyn hem content. & so sche dede. Sythen sche toke hir leue at hir hosband & of þe holy ankyr…"

the parish priest, the anchorite who had been her spiritual guide, and her husband. Her description suggests an amiable parting, but other passages show that it was the result of complex negotiations with her husband, during which she used financial and social leverage to get her way. Kempe, much to her husband's chagrin, desired not only to travel to Jerusalem, but also to live with him in celibacy and to keep a Friday fast. Her book recorded their debate over which aspects of their life together they would give up for the sake of her devotions, and which they would keep for the sake of her husband's comfort. After a certain amount of discussion of the seriousness of her commitment to chastity, he made her this offer, which contained his first reference to her pilgrimage:

> Margery, grant me my desire, and I shall grant you your desire. My first wish is that we shall lie together in one bed as we have done before; the second, that you shall pay my debts before you go to Jerusalem; and the third, that you shall eat and drink with me on Fridays as you were wont to do.[49]

Margery's husband must have previously withheld his permission for her to become a pilgrim, and was at this point offering it implicitly with the request that she pay his debts; otherwise, he was offering her no concessions here—nothing of "her desire." Her husband, then, had offered to release Margery from her marital debt for the duration of one pilgrimage if she, among other things, would resume their sexual relationship upon her return.

Kempe engaged in a mystical conference with Jesus over the propriety of these arrangements, wherein Jesus told her that she should give up the Friday fast to get her other wishes from her husband.[50] In fact, Jesus explained, "I told you to fast so that you'd more quickly and easily get your wish, which has now been granted."[51] Whether this reference to "your wish" indicated her celibacy or her pilgrimage is unclear; but Jesus had definitely entered into the haggling mentality of

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[49] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, Chapter 11, 19; also *Book*, ed. Meech, 24: "Margery, grawnt me my desyr, & I schal grawnt ȝow ȝowr desyr. My first desyr is þat we xal lyn stylle to-gedyr in o bed as we han do be-for; þe secunde þat ȝe schal pay my dettys er ȝe go to Iherusalem; & þe thrydde þat ȝe schal etyn & drynkyn wyth me on þe Fryday as ȝe wer wont to don."

[50] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley,Chapter 11, 19–20; also *Book*, ed. Meech, 24.

[51] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, Chapter 11, 19–20; also *Book*, ed. Meech, 24: "For, my derworthy dowtyr, Þis was Þe cawse Þat I bad Þe fastyn for Þu schuldyst Þe sonar opteyn & getyn Þi desyr, & now it is grawntyd Þe."

the proceedings, helping Kempe to use aspects of wifehood as leverage in the negotiation. Armed with this divine instruction, Kempe returned to her husband with a counter-offer:

> Grant me that you shall not come in my bed, and I grant you to requite your debts before I go to Jerusalem. And make my body free to God so that you never challenge me by asking the debt of matrimony after this day while you live, and I shall eat and drink on Friday at your bidding.[52]

The clearing of debts and their meals together on Fridays, the financial and social leverage available to Kempe, carried great weight, as her husband did agree to give up their sexual relationship in return for these favors. Carolyn Bynum has also noted the ability of medieval women to use their relationship with food as a form of social manipulation.[53] Most importantly for our purposes, the negotiations illustrate the possibility for women to obtain permission from their husbands to travel, exercising agency even within the constraints of marriage.[54] It is possible that such a round of bargaining could have preceded many other women's journeys.

A second option that appeared in the narratives was for women to engage in long-distance pilgrimage alongside their husbands. To go on pilgrimage with a spouse eliminated possible disagreements and restrictions imposed by the husband, and also meant that the woman would be traveling with a protector. Morrison has found several examples of English married couples making plans for long-distance pilgrimage together.[55] A married woman, together with her husband, joined Fabri's second pilgrimage. She earned the universal loathing of the rest of the pilgrims because of her noisy curiosity. Interestingly, her companions objected to her presence not only because of her personality, but also because she was the only woman on board.[56] Apparently, to travel under

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[52] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, Chapter 11, 20; also *Book*, ed. Meech, 25: "Sere, yf it lyke ȝow, ȝe schal grawnt me my desyr, & ȝe schal haue ȝowr desyr. Grawntyth me þat ȝe schal not komyn in my bed, & I grawnt ȝow to qwyte ȝowr dettys er I go to Ierusalem. & makyth my body fre to God so þat ȝe neuyr make no chalengyng in me to askyn no dett of matrimony aftyr þis day whyl ȝe leuyn, & I schal etyn & drynkyn on þe Fryday at ȝowr byddyng."

[53] Carolyn Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1987), 220.

[54] Bennett, introduction to *Sisters and Workers*, 6.

[55] Morrison, *Women Pilgrims*, p. 46.

[56] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 166; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 150.

the auspices of one's husband alone was not considered enough; for the sake of propriety, especially considering that celibacy was expected of all pilgrims for the duration of their trips, a woman required female traveling companions.

Finally, some female pilgrims to Jerusalem and Rome overcame the problem of spousal permission by waiting until they no longer had a husband to stop them. Indeed, the status of widowhood was an ideal basis for this form of devotion. Again canon law regarded widows as *miserabiles personae*, entitled to the protection of the church and of church courts, and widows also had no husband who might deny them permission.[57] Indeed, many widows looked to no direct authority figure at all.[58] For women of the merchant class or the nobility, widowhood often meant assuming the husband's role as head of a craft shop or family business, or manager of family lands, until they remarried or their sons were of age to take over these responsibilities. As Clara Estow pointed out for medieval Castile, "a widow assumed social, legal, and economic responsibilities that set her apart from the rest of adult female society."[59]

From this position of relative freedom widows found it easier to choose to become pilgrims. Morrison has found several examples of later medieval English widows who made preparations and received letters of protection in order to become pilgrims.[60] And visual evidence suggests that a devotional pilgrimage may have come to be regarded as a life-cycle event, a common part of the experience of wealthy widows. The *Hours of Catherine of Cleves* include a series of marginal images that tell the story of just such a woman. She first appears as the widow-to-be in the full-page deathbed scene that accompanies the Office of the Dead. (See Plate 2.) John Plummer, the manuscript's editor, suggests that the woman reading in the foreground is the widow-to-be, but the blue dress of the woman directly tending the sick man, rather than the grey dress of the woman in the foreground, closely matches the clothing of the widow who appears later in marginalia.

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[57] Brundage, "Widows as Disadvantaged Persons," passim.

[58] For brief summaries of the freedoms and complications of widowhood in the Middle Ages, see Louise Mirror, introduction to *Upon My Husband's Death*, 1–17; and LeBarge, *A Small Sound*, 164–166.

[59] Clara Estow, "Widows in the Chronicles of Late Medieval Castile," in *Upon My Husband's Death*, 153–168, 153.

[60] Morrison, *Women Pilgrims*, 45–46.

Later, in the margin of an image of a corpse readied for burial, this same widow in the blue gown and black cloak grieves, her head bowed. (See Plate 3.) Then, in the margin of an illumination of St. James (who is rendered as a Compostela pilgrim), she confesses to a friar (see Plate 4); her pairing with the pilgrim St. James makes clear that this confession was made before undertaking a pilgrimage, as in her final appearance in the margins below St. Thomas, she goes is pictured as a pilgrim herself. (See Plate 5.) In that image she wears a scroll on her hat bearing the legend "fuit hiis manens," suggesting that there may have been penance left undone by the husband which his widow was now carrying out.[61] One commentator also suggests that in this panel the pilgrim-widow was "joined here with St. Thomas because of his far-reaching travels."[62]

The appearance of this tiny widow-pilgrim narrative in the marginalia seems to be an archetypical portrayal of the pilgrim-widow, rather than a representation of a particular woman. The lay persons represented in illuminated books of hours are often specific people—usually the book's owner—and in this case, Catherine of Cleves makes two appearances in which her portrait is labeled with her name.[63] She may also appear another time as a personification of Piety, unnamed, but wearing the same clothing and elaborate hairstyle worn by Catherine in earlier, named portraits.[64] However, our grieving widow bears no resemblance to this splendidly-dressed young woman. Further, these images could not have been a commemoration of Catherine's loss of a husband; the *Hours* appear to have been made no later than 1445, when Catherine's husband, Arnold of Guelders (d. 1465), was still living.[65] Internal iconographic evidence also suggesting that this pilgrim widow is an archetype, rather than an individual, lies in the marginalia that surrounds her first (central) appearance in the deathbed scene. In that scene, two women tend the dying man, and another woman prays, as does a priest; but in the background, the man's heir and another young man dressed in gaudy frippery stand back, coolly awaiting the outcome of the drama.

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[61] For their close scrutiny and reading of the scroll-image in the orignial manuscript I am indebted to William M. Voelkle of the Pierpont Morgan Library and Rob Dückers of Emerson College European Center at Kasteel Well, Netherlands.

[62] John Plummer, commentary on *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves: Introduction and Commentaries* (New York: George Braziller, 1966), plate 109.

[63] Plummer, *Hours*, plate 1 and 96.

[64] Plummer, *Hours*, plate 57.

[65] On the probable date of the manuscript, see Plummer, introduction to *Hours*, 21.

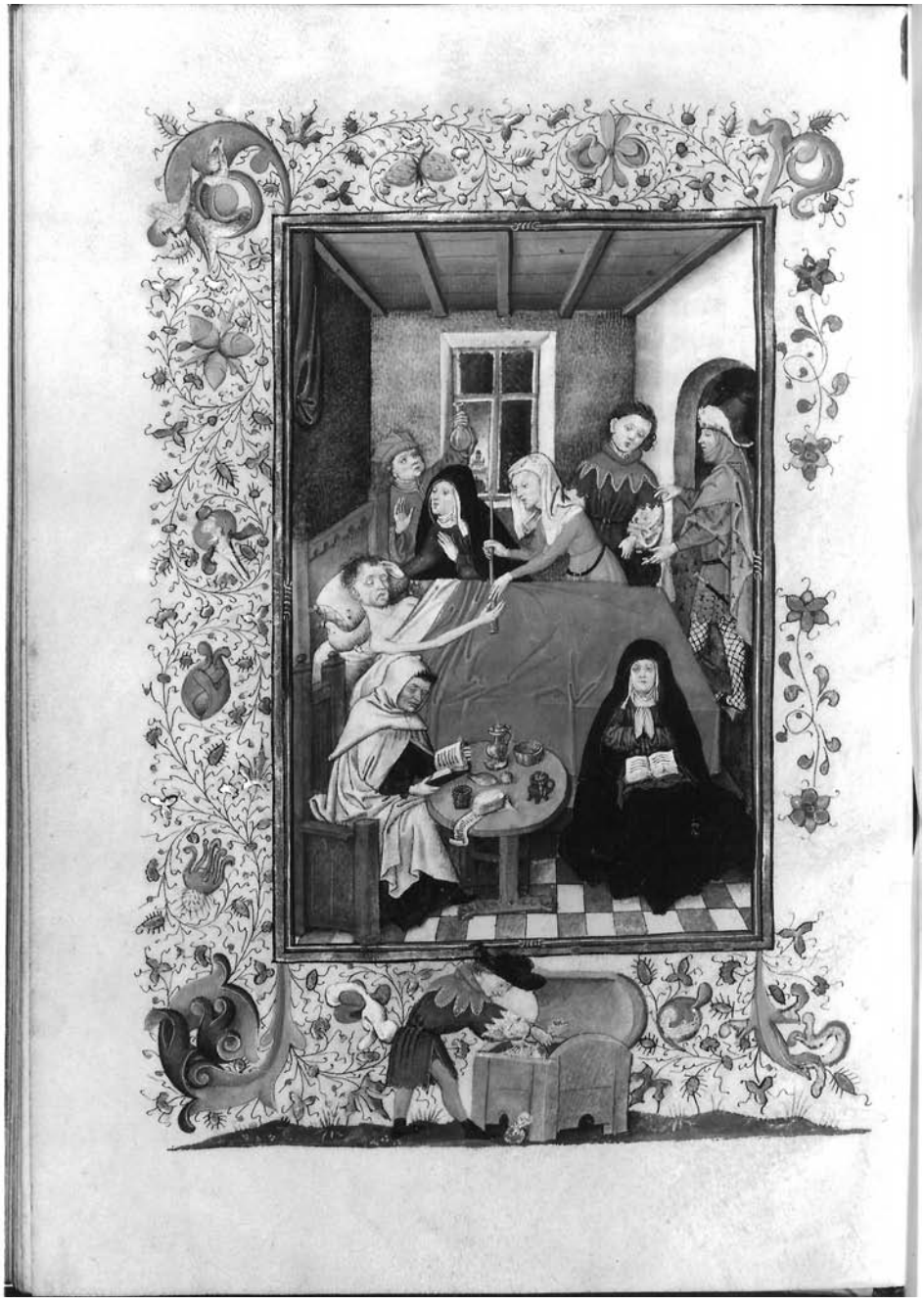

Plate 2. Illumination accompanying the Office of the Dead. *Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Gallery. ms. 945 and ms. 917, f. 180.

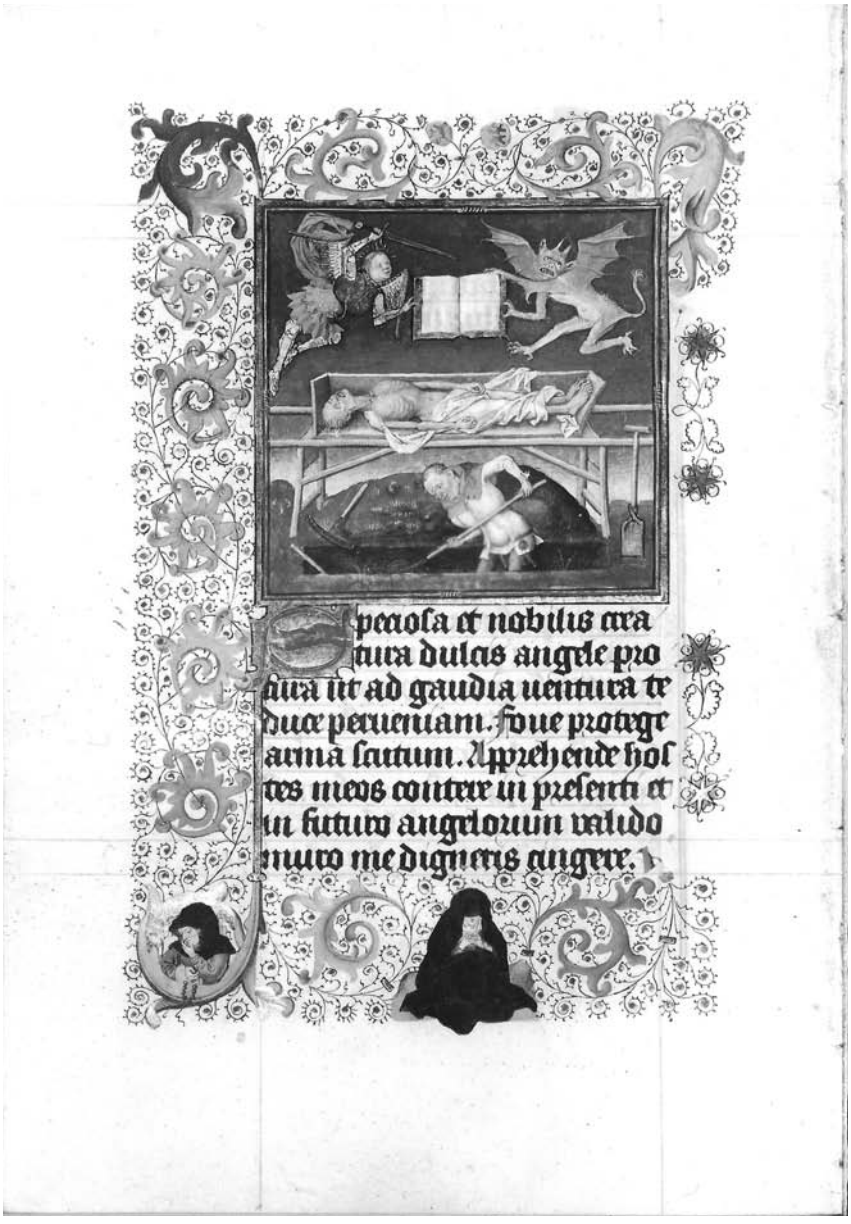
peccosa et nobilis ara
tura dulas angele pro
tua ut ad gaudia uentura te
duc perueniam. foue protege
anima tuum. Apprehende hos
tes meos contra in presenti et
in futuro angelorum valido
muro me dignetis augere.

Plate 3. Burial Scene. *Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Gallery. ms. 945 and ms. 917, f. 206.

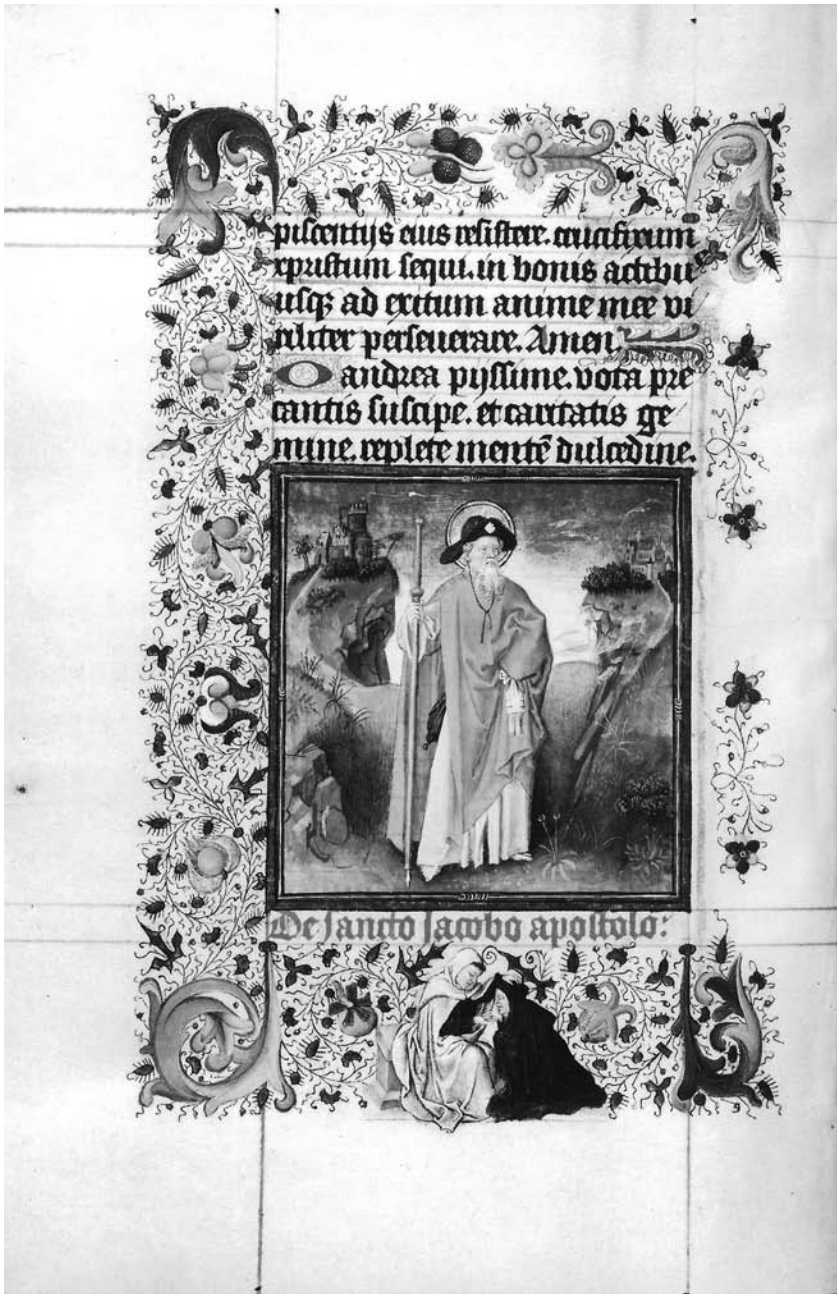

Plate 4. Illumination accompanying a prayer to St. James the Greater. *Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Gallery. ms. 945 and ms. 917, f. 216.

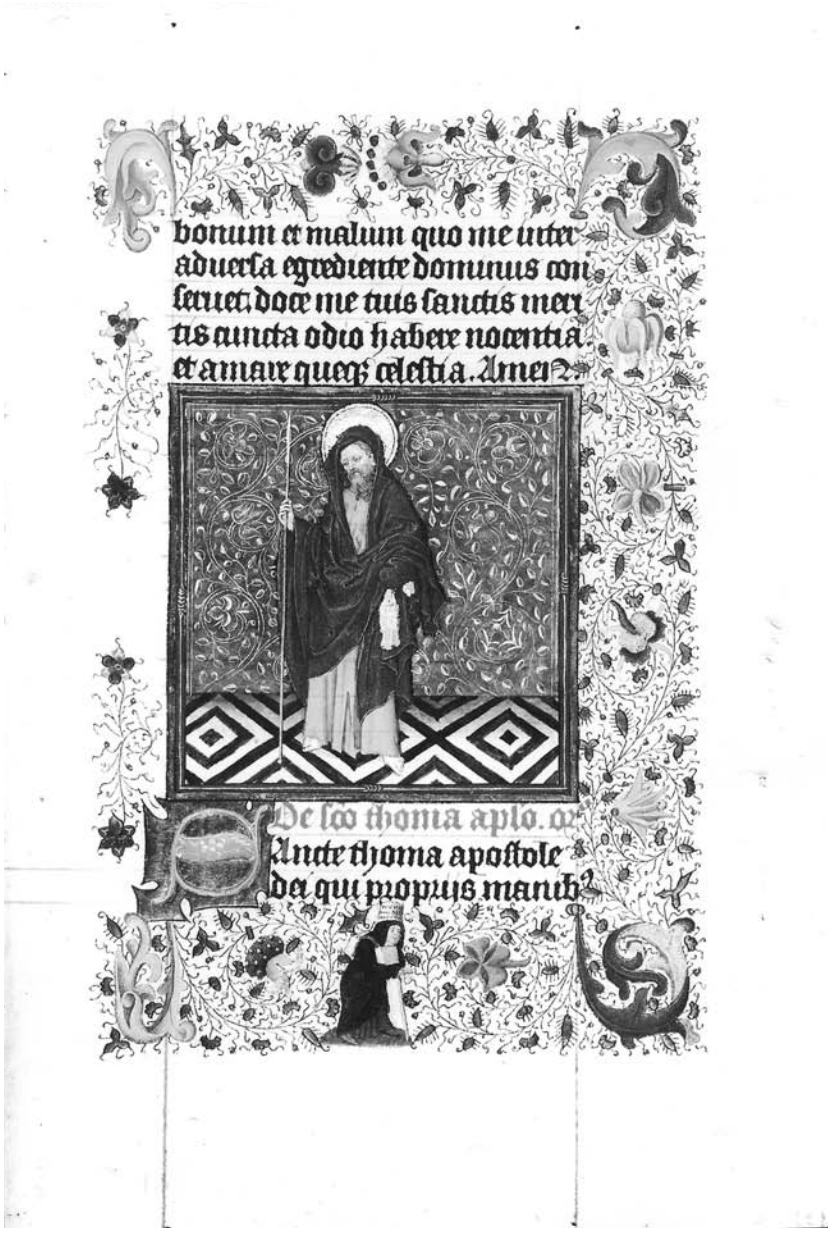
bonum et malum quo me uer
aduersa egrediente dominus co
seruet; doce me tuus sanctus mer
tus sancta odio habere nocentia
et amare quecq; celestia. Amen
De sco thoma aplo. o
Ancte thoma apostole
de qui propius manu

Plate 5. Illumination accompanying a prayer to St. Thomas the Apostle. *Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Gallery. ms. 945 and ms. 917, f. 221.

Their emotional detachment from the dying man is a mark of their self-interest in his death; the same heir appears in the margin below the deathbed scene, lifting bags of money—his inheritance—out of a chest. If the widow is a particular woman, but she is not Catherine, then she must be some family member of Catherine's; and if that were the case, then this heir must also be family, and his behavior was recorded here in a most uncomplimentary fashion. It seems more likely that this is a scene intended to evoke the stereotypical associations of the deathbed, rather than the real experience of a specific grieving family. Hence, both the grasping heir and the widow-turned-pilgrim were understood to be common patterns of behavior; the relative ease of pilgrimage for a widow led at least one artist to feel that one state might naturally lead to the other.

Real pilgrim widows appeared in more detail in the pilgrimage narratives. On Fabri's first pilgrimage, the group was joined by "certain women well-stricken in years, pious, wealthy matrons, six in number."[66] In other places Fabri called them "ancient matrons,"[67] although their later perseverance in the face of seasickness, heat, and other rigors of travel suggests that they were not elderly or frail. They too were probably of the urban merchant classes, as he described them as "wealthy" but never as noble; they were "matrons" or mothers, but their age and the lack of any mention of husbands suggests that they may have been widows as well, free of either economic or social constraint on their movements.

Femininity as Liability in Pilgrimage Groups

"Before or during the course of the voyage," wrote Pierre-André Sigal, "pilgrims sought to form groups."[68] Membership in a group was necessary for the safety of any medieval traveler, and doubly so when she ventured beyond familiar language, customs, and legal structures. By the fourteenth century the pilgrimage to Jerusalem had become a

[66] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 11; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 31: "et quaedam etiam mulieres, vetulae, devotae matronae divites…"

[67] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Start, vol. 7 & 8, 26; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 43: "Videntes autem antiquae vetulae matronae necessitatem nostram…"

[68] Pierre-André Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale (XI^e–XII^e siècle)* (Paris, Les éditions du cerf, 1985), 118: "Avant ou au cours du voyage, les pèlerins cherchiant à se grouper."

tightly-regulated form of group tourism led by Venetian galley captains under the close supervision of the Muslim governments of the Levant.[69] While women had as much legal right as men to join such groups, and regularly did so, the social milieu of long-distance pilgrimage groups was nevertheless a difficult one for women. Male pilgrims, hostile towards women's participation, only tolerated women at the price of their silence and invisibility. Perhaps the greatest difficulty for women was that they had no social role in large groups of male travelers. Women who traveled to Jerusalem or Rome were not identifiably fulfilling any duty traditionally ascribed to women by medieval society: they were not caregivers or providers, they were certainly not supposed to be sexual partners to the other (temporarily celibate) pilgrims, their journeys added nothing to their household economies, and their devotions were not cloistered. Since the Jerusalem pilgrimage did not include a socially acceptable niche for women's participation, women who participated in it seemed out-of-place and annoying to their male counterparts, and were treated accordingly.

For these reasons, women might have difficulty finding a group with which to travel, particularly when they had to form such a group by meeting and striking functional agreements with strangers. Such temporary alliances were less often necessary on short pilgrimages, but on long ones such as the Jerusalem pilgrimage, they were a positive requirement. Jerusalem pilgrims gathered from all over Europe in the spring in Venice, and took ship from there to the Holy Lands. From the early fourteenth century forward, the Venetian government actively welcomed pilgrims of both sexes; a 1305 decree stated that all pilgrims, male and female, should be allowed to come to St. Mark's freely.[70] These people then had to find passage on a ship bound from Venice to Jaffa, and in the early fourteenth century, such ships might carry only a few pilgrims or might carry a group of over a hundred. Thus, in earlier periods, they might or might not need to join into larger groups. For exceptionally wealthy pilgrims, there was never a need to form groups beyond the large entourage they arrived with; they could afford to hire a ship for their own use, as did an unnamed group of six noble pilgrims and their party of eighty people in May of 1382.[71]

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[69] See Brefeld, *A Guidebook for Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, 19; Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 189–90.

[70] See Newett, introduction to *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage*, 29; See also Venice, Archivio di Stato Di Venetia, *Maggior Consiglio* register 15, f. 95v.

[71] Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Miste* register 37, f. 81v, 27 May 1382.

Over time, however, the very presence of these wealthy pilgrims led the Venetian government to engage in tighter regulation of the pilgrim-carrying trade. The reason for this regulation was stridently asserted by the Senate. When pilgrims were mistreated or their contracts with galley-captains were abrogated, they raised complaints with the Venetian government and demanded refunds; even worse, some of these disgruntled pilgrims were very important people. In 1417 we hear that "many lords and many nobles" had refused to finish a return trip from the Holy Lands with their Venetian captain because they were being underfed, and were overcrowded by the merchandise on board.[72] Because these people were "great lords, and could greatly injure our merchants and citizens,"[73] the government set out to curb such abuses in order to protect valuable trade ties. Later, in 1438, the Senate adopted a short-lived ban on the building or equipping of any new pilgrim-galleys at all, stating that the mistreatment of "princes, counts, and other noblemen who went disguised as pilgrims" aboard the galleys caused nothing but trouble for the government and the citizens of Venice.[74] The problem appears to have been an ongoing one. Remarkably similar concerns were raised in the preamble to yet another round of regulatory legislation, in 1497, eighty years after the first such regulation.[75]

As monitoring of the pilgrim-trade became more of a concern of the Venetian Senate, pilgrims were gradually barred from negotiating individual passages on merchant ships, and instead were required to book passage only on a state-designated pilgrim-galley, thus joining with several other smaller groups of pilgrims under the guardianship of a galley-captain. These large groups were sheltered by progressively more far-reaching legal protections which demanded that they not be swindled, left behind, or overcrowded.[76] The pilgrims were to

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[72] Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Misti* register 52, fol. 61r, December 6, 1417: "…multis dominis multibus et nobilibus et aliis personis…"

[73] Newett, introduction to *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage*, 57; see also Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Misti* register 52, fol. 61r, December 6, 1417: "…magni domini, et multum poterunt nocere mercatoribus et civibus nostris…"

[74] See Newett, introduction to *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage*, 66; see also Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Misti* register 60, folio 66v, March 11, 1438: "…principibus et comitibus et illis nobilibus viris qui cum habitu peregrino incogniti vadunt…"

[75] See Newett, introduction to *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage*, 99; see also Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Mar.* register 14, folio 112v, January, 1496 (M.V.).

[76] See the excellent and detailed summary of this legislation in Newett, introduction to *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage*, 39–101.

make their contracts with the captains through local guides, and then remain together under the leadership of the galley-captain for the duration of the sea voyage as well as during their tours of Jerusalem and its environs.

It is striking, in light of the great concerns of pundits and didactic writers about female pilgrims, that the Venetian government had none. They did not regulate the process of pilgrimage according to the gender of the pilgrim; indeed, in the fourteenth century, when the Senate granted a ship-owner the right to carry pilgrims, the statutes specified the number to be carried, "both men and women," as if to be certain that women joining the ship were in fact counted among the passengers, rather than passed over as unimportant.[77] Their interest here was entirely practical. In order to prevent overcrowding, the number of human bodies—the size of the cargo—was the matter of central importance to regulators. Beyond this concern over nose-counts, however, there were no legislative acts by the Venetian Senate specifically intended to protect, segregate, or limit female Jerusalem pilgrims. All passengers paid the same fees and occupied the same amount of space, and this was all that mattered to the experienced businessmen who ran this tourist program and instituted legislative control over it.

Women who made it as far as Venice, then, entered into a process whereby they must make an agreement with a captain, hoping both that he and their fellow-passengers, up to a hundred-odd perfect strangers who would become their fellow-pilgrims in Jerusalem, would accept their presence. They had to negotiate this passage in a tightly regulated atmosphere wherein none of the regulation (and concomitant possibility for legal grievance and legal redress) pertained to their status as women. Despite the relative unconcern of the Senate, female pilgrims did not find easy acceptance from their male counterparts. When Fabri's first pilgrimage was preparing to embark from Venice, the six 'wealthy matrons' wanted to join the group. Fabri detailed the social complexities that the matrons faced when trying to secure passage to the Holy Land:

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[77] Several examples of this phrasing in the legislation are listed in Newett, introduction to *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage*, 36–38. My examination of the original documents at the Archivio di Stato di Venezia has confirmed that Newett's summary is exceedingly precise: she lists the proviso 'men and women' consistently wherever it appears in the legislation, even though she did not fully quote and or translate the text of each law.

> The proud nobles, however, were not pleased . . . and thought they would not embark on a ship in which these ladies were to go, considering it a disgrace that they should go to receive the honour of knighthood in company with old women. These haughty spirits endeavored to persuade us not to take passage in the ship in which these old women meant to sail; but other wiser and more conscientious knights contradicted those proud men, and rejoiced in the holy penitence of these ladies, hoping that their holiness would render our voyage safer. On account of this there arose an implacable quarrel between these noblemen, which lasted until it pleased God to remove those proud men from among us. Howbeit, those devout ladies remained in our company in both going thither and returning.[78]

This situation exposes serious social tensions, which included difficulties over gender as well as class. Passengers on pilgrim-galleys might be of disparate social backgrounds, and living cheek-by-jowl with those of a different background seemed to disturb many of the pilgrims. For example, one anonymous French pilgrim was a member of a group of eighty or a hundred, and he mentioned social distinctions in even the most mundane of circumstances: "Thursday the fifteenth, a poor pilgrim of Spain lost his hat and the wind carried it into the sea while he was sleeping on the deck of the galley."[79] In the case of Fabri's women, while the captain appeared willing to have them join, they faced a group of nobles angry at their presence, whose anger stemmed from the inclusions of women—and, it would appear from the language of the passage, *non-noble* women—at a knighting ceremony at the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. The nobles' pressure on the other passengers to take passage on another ship could have been intended to force the ship's captain to break his contract with the matrons. Such breaches of contract were illegal, and captains who stood in breach of a duly

[78] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Start, vol. 7 & 8, 11; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 31–2: "Hoc quidem superbi nobiles aegere ferentes cogitabant navem, in qua transducendae essent illae matronae, non velle ascendere, indignum aestimantes, in vetularum consortio ad militiam suscipiendam pergere. Et ad hoc conabantur superbi illi omnes nos inducere, ne navem illam conduceremus, in quam vetulae venturae erant. Sed alii milites prudentiores et conscientiosi contradicebant superbis illis, et gaudebant de poenitentia illarum matronarum, sperantes, quod propter devotionem earum navigatio nostra salubrior fieret. Unde propter illam causam orta fuit inter nobiles illos implacabilis inimicitia, et duravit, quousque Deus illos superbos de medio tulit. Manserunt autem devotae matronae illae nobiscum, cum per mare intrando et exuendo."

[79] Charles Schafer, ed., *Le Voyage de Saincte Cyté de Hierusalem avec la description des lieux porz, villes, citez et aultres passaiges fait l'an mil quatre cens quatre vingtz* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1882), 33: "Le Jeudy XV, un povre pellerin d'Espaigne perdit son bonnet et luy emporta le vent en le mer, en dormant sur le bort de la gallée."

recorded contract were subject to punishment by the Venetian government, so it is unsurprising that this ploy failed.[80] But the combination of a tight regulation of contracts and a laissez-faire approach to gender segregation of pilgrims left the matrons at the heart of a group deeply divided between those who resented them and those who supported them. Fabri's language makes it entirely clear both that this division among the men on board existed and on which side of it he fell. But it surely could not have been a comfortable position for the "ancient ladies" to be cooped up on a small ship with tensions running high over their very presence.

Even those pilgrims who had chosen to support the six matrons did not regard them as equal partners in this rigorous spiritual endeavor. Instead, both their supporters and their detractors placed the matrons firmly in the category of 'other.' Throughout his book, Fabri emphasized the bravery of the matrons in the face of odds made overwhelming by their age and gender. Fabri wrote that he "was astonished at the courage of these old women, who through old age were scarcely able to support their own weight, yet forgot their own frailty…"[81] He hinted that other supporters of the women also looked upon them as extraordinary, and specifically hoped that their exceptional penitence would encourage God to protect the galley. But his view of the women as especially brave may have felt as divisive and problematic to them as being thought an especial nuisance. His attitude of praise may have helped to polarize the group's opinions, making the women the focus of an ongoing conflict among the other passengers, a conflict that reduced their ability to remain invisible to their companions.

Fabri also recounted tensions over the presence of a woman on his second pilgrimage. That group was originally made up entirely of men. At the last minute, however, the captain added a few more pilgrims, including the Fleming and his wife. The pilgrims unanimously resented her presence:

> There was no one on board our galley who was not displeased at the coming of this old woman, and at the thought of one woman having to

[80] Newett, introduction to *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage*, 100; see also Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Mar.* register 14 folio 112v, January 14, 1497.

[81] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Start, vol. 7 & 8, 11; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 31: "Miratus fui audaciam illarum vetularum, quae se ipsas prae senio ferre vix poterat, et tamen fragilitatis propriae oblitae, amore illius sanctae terrae in consortium militium juvenum se ingerebant, et laborem fortium virorum subibant."

> dwell along among so many noblemen, especially as she seemed when we first saw her to be restless and inquisitive… She ran hither and thither throughout the ship, and was full of curiosity, wanting to hear and see everything, and made herself hated exceedingly.[82]

These criticisms of the Fleming woman shed light on the expectations of pilgrim groups with regard to female participants. If women must be present on pilgrimage, it was expected that they should remain silent and invisible. The Fleming woman, according to Fabri, was a problem because she was the only woman on board the galley, but it was her refusal to remain invisible that Fabri and his companions found particularly irritating. Female pilgrims were routinely expected to segregate themselves from the men with whom they traveled. According to Fabri, on board the galley, "women pilgrims do not come to the common table, but remain in their berths, and both eat and sleep there."[83] Fabri described these berths as miserable and small: "A pilgrim can hardly move without touching his neighbor; moreover, the place is enclosed and exceeding hot, and full of various foul vapors."[84] Fabri's English contemporary William Wey voiced a similar opinion about the conditions in the berths: "choose yourself a place in the said galley on the highest level; for in the lowest under it is right smoldering hot and stinking."[85] Thus, the demand for segregation entailed a serious sacrifice of comfort for female passengers.

Some, apparently, chose not to make that sacrifice, a choice which was most unwelcome. Fabri continued about the problem of the Flemish woman's visibility at some length: while she was "a thorn in the eyes

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[82] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 166; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 149–150: "Ad ingressum autem illius mulieris multi turbati fuerunt, pro eo, quod ipsa sola erat in galea, quia nulla mulier erat nobiscum… Nec erat aliquis in nostra galea, cui ingressus illius vetulae non displiceret, pro eo, quod una sola muliercula inter tot generosos viros commorari deberet, signanter cum satis vaga et curiosa primo aspectu videretur;… Discurrebat enim continue per navem, et curiosissima erat, omnia videre aut audire volens, et se multum odiosam faciebat."

[83] Fabri, "'Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 153; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 137: "Mulieres peregrinae non accedunt ad mensam communem sed manuent in suis stantiis, et ibi manducant, ibi dormiunt."

[84] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 15; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 138: "Vix potest se peregrinus movere sine contactu collateralis; locus etiam est clausus et caldissimus ac grossis vaporibus ac diversis plenus."

[85] William Wey, *The Itineraries of William Wey*, ed. B. Badinel (London: Nichols, for the Roxburghe Club, 1857), 4: "Yf ye goo in a galey make yowre covenaunte wyth the patrone bytyme, and chese yow a place in the seyd galey in the overest stage; for in the lawyest under hyt ys ryght smoleryng hote and stynking." Modern rendering is the author's own.

of us all,"[86] he points out that "those seven (*sic*) old women in whose company I had made the voyage before…made less noise and were seen less that this one old beldame."[87] It could not have been the mere presence of an active and curious pilgrim which upset them so much, because Fabri describes the behavior of the male pilgrims at length, casually noting that "some shout aloud for lightness of heart…Others run up the rigging, others jump, others show their strength by lifting heavy weights or doing other feats."[88] The men's energetic play inspired Fabri to give future travelers this warning:[89]

> Let him also beware of getting in the way for the crew of the galley when they are about to run to their work, for, however, noble he may be, nay, were he a bishop, they will push against him, overthrow him, and trample on him, because work at sea has to be done at lightning speed, and admits of no delay.

It must have annoyed the galley crew just as much to have men underfoot as it did to have women there; but the ambivalence which surrounded women pilgrims was great enough that they were required to remain invisible, while Fabri simply cautioned men to get out of the way quickly when necessary.

The demand for segregation continued throughout the journey, not just in the close quarters of the galley. Fabri mentions that near the pilgrim hospitals in Jerusalem "was another great hall, wherein women pilgrims were wont to sojourn, since they were on no account permitted to live with their men in the great hospital."[90] This mention of gender segregation of the living quarters is repeated in a number of the

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[86] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 167; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 150: "Omnibus erat spina in oculis haec foemina."

[87] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 166; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 150: "Nam pro vero dico, quod VII illae vetulae, cum quibus prima vice transfretavi, quietiores fuerunt et et rarius videbantur, quam illa unica anus."

[88] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 150; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 134–135: "Ideo aliqui statim ut de mensa surgunt, ascendunt, et per galeam inquirunt, ubi melius vendatur vinum, et ibi se ponunt, et totem diem juxta vinem deducunt….alii clamant ex jucunditate…Alii per funes currunt; alii saltant; alii suam fortitudinem probant levando onera, vel alias faciendo animosa."

[89] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 161; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 145: "Caveat etiam ne galeotis incipientibus currere ad labores impedimentum cursus praebeat, quia eum, si etiam nobilis multum esset, vel episcopus, trudunt et deorsum dejiciunt, super eumque procurrunt, quia labores navales sunt celerrimi et ignei, nec capiunt moram."

[90] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 395; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 322: "Juxta eandem domum erat alia curia magna, in qua manere solebant foeminae peregrinae, quae viris in hospitali mango cohabitare minime permittebantur."

narratives, reflecting a widespread concern over the chastity of pilgrims. One gets the impression from Fabri's description that the women's quarters were an addendum to the facilities available to men; the men lived in the "great hospital" (*in hospitali magno*) and the women in "another great hall" (*alia curia magna*). Separated, women and men posed no threat to one another's chastity, which seems to be the concern Fabri had when he commented that male and female pilgrims were "on no account allowed" to stay together. But the vehement insistence upon this kind of segregation on board ship, especially in the cases of old women whom the male pilgrims held in contempt, suggests that there was more behind the practice of gender segregation than a simple fear of unchaste behavior.

The demand for the invisibility of female pilgrims sometimes extended beyond the journey and into their experiences at the shrines that were their goal. In a few cases, women were barred from holy places because of their gender. The authors of pilgrimage narratives offered a variety of explanations for this state of affairs. For example, some popular shrines in Rome and Jerusalem were overcrowded, and therefore considered too dangerous for a woman to enter. Sumption has examined this phenomenon briefly, and argued that closures of a few pilgrimage sites to women can by and large be attributed to a fear for their safety. He noted that on at least two occasions, at St. Denis in the 1130s and at an exposure of the head of St. Martial in Avignon in 1388, women, some of them pregnant, were injured in the crushing crowds.[91] According to the English chronicler John Capgrave, who wrote a description of Rome's history and churches for the use of pilgrims in c. 1450, some of the shrines in Rome were also completely closed to women. He complained that there were many "lewed causes to whech I wil ȝive no credens" which explained the exclusion of women, and then provided the reason he found most likely:

> All those who have been at Rome know well that the women there are very desirous to go on pilgrimage and to touch and kiss every holy relic. Now in truth these places that are forbidden to them are very small in number. And perhaps some woman was in the press [of a crowd] and either because of sickness or because of pregnancy was in great peril there; and for this reason they were forbidden to enter these houses, as I suppose.[92]

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[91] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 263.

[92] John Capgrave, *Ye Solace of Pilgrimes: A Description of Rome, circa A.D. 1450, by John Capgrave, An Austin Friar of King's Lynn*, ed. C. A. Mills (London: Oxford University Press,

Capgrave listed the chapel of St. John the Baptist at St. John Lateran as closed to women, but explained that they receive the same indulgences as men if they touched the door of the shrine.[93] He did not specifically explain how women could obtain indulgences at the altars of Saint Leo and the Holy Cross in St. Peter's, however, and again women were not allowed to enter these places.[94]

But women's exclusion from entering certain shrines was not always understood simply as a protective measure. Women's innate sinfulness was also used to explain why they were excluded from some shrines. Herein lay the "lewed causes" that Capgrave refused to repeat. The Spanish pilgrim Pero Tafur, who made his pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem between 1435 and 1439, wrote that at the chapel of the Sancta Sanctorum in Rome, "no women are allowed to enter the chapel, for the reason, as they say, that a woman once uttered such things that she burst asunder."[95] Rather than risk another untidy incident, the shrine was simply closed to women. Nicolaus Muffel told an even more graphic story of a woman who was kneeling at the same shrine when 'nature happened to her,' leaving a stain on the marble steps.[96] For fear of other women marking the shrine by menstruation, with its connotations of ritual uncleanliness, it was closed to women altogether.[97] Yet another set of stories targeted women's pride, an essential part of the complaint against female pilgrims, as the bar to entering pilgrimage shrines. They related that women who appeared at pilgrimage shrines wearing elaborate hairstyles were mystically prohibited from

1911) 77: "Al þoo whech haue be at rome knowe weel þat þe women þer be passing desirous to goo on pilgrimage and for to touch and kisse euery holy relik. Now in uery sothfastnesse þese places whech are forbode hem be rith smale in quantite. And uphap sum woman be in the prees eþir for seknesse or with child hath be in grete perel þere and for þis cause þei wer forbode þe entre of þese houses as I suppose." Modern rendering is the author's own.

[93] Capgrave, *Ye Solace*, 71–2.

[94] Capgrave, *Ye Solace*, 63.

[95] Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures, 1435–1439*, trans. Malcom Letts (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1926), 39.

[96] Capgrave, *Ye Solace*, 77, n. 1: "…und deweil er ob dem altar stund und sy in ansach mit poser begir, do eging yr die nature; das sicht man auf dem merbelstein do dy fraw ist gestanden."

[97] See Charles T. Wood, "Language, laughter, and lay solidarities: an inquiry into the decline of pilgrimages and crusading," in *Law, laity, and solidarities: Essays in honor of Susan Reynolds*, ed. Pauline Stafford, Janet L. Nelson and Jane Martindale (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 238–240; Patricia Crawford, "Attitudes to Menstruation in Seventeenth-century England," *Past and Present* 91 (1981): 47–73, 60; and Carole Rawcliffe, "Women, Childbirth, and Religion in Later Medieval England," in *Women and Religion in Medieval England*, ed. Diane Wood (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2003), 96.

entering until they had cut off the offending locks.[98] Whether or not these stories had anything to do with the official decision to close the Sancta Sanctorum and other shrines to women, the existence of such stories is telling. In the popular understanding, at least, real women who became devotional pilgrims could easily be interpreted as vicious, liable to defile the holiness of a shrine with their very presence.

Women might be excluded from entering a shrine even if it was not officially closed to them. Fabri's six matrons, for example, did not enter the shrine at the bathing-pool of Siloam in Jerusalem. According to Fabri's description, the place was very crowded: "those in front cried out against the impatience of those behind, and those who were last cried at the slowness of those who were in front, and those in the middle cried out because they were squeezed by both the others…" As a result, the matrons remained outside, and the male pilgrims were considerate enough to bring them some of the holy water, "for, by reason of the aforesaid crowding and pushing, our companions, the pilgrim ladies, did not go in, but sat quietly and peaceably saying their prayers outside."[99] This case suggests that even where a site was not officially closed to women, they at times chose to remain outside and conform to the expectations of their companions that they remain silent and docile.

Why, then, was silence and invisibility demanded of women who went on devotional pilgrimage? The popular stories of women who defiled shrines with their sinful natures or bodies reflect the same series of connections between femininity, pride, and lust that appear in satire or prescriptive literature. But pervading the sources there is also a sense that, socially speaking, women simply *had no place* in large groups of male travelers. Fabri's "haughty knights," at least in part, rejected women's presence at a strictly male social space: a knighting ceremony. More generally, unlike their sisters who sought the help of the saints, women who traveled to Jerusalem or Rome were not traveling to fulfill some caregiving capacity. Indeed, they were not identifiably

[98] Jean J. Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*, trans. Lucy Tomlin Smith (London: Ernst Benn Limited, 1950), 217–218.

[99] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 527–28; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 418–419: "…primi clamabant propter sequentium importunitatem, et ultimi propter praecedentium tarditatem, medii vero propter pressuram utrorumque clamabant….et exportavimus in scutellis et flasconibus nostris aquam sacram pro his, qui in hiatum ingredi non poterant; propter praedictas enim pressuras mulieres peregrinae, sociae nostrae, non introiverunt, sed cum quiete et pace foris sedentes manserunt in sua devotione…"

fulfilling *any* role traditionally ascribed to women by medieval society. Since devotional pilgrimage did not include a socially-acceptable niche for women's participation, women who did participate seemed out of place, underfoot, and annoying to their male counterparts. Hence, it was easier for them if they remained little-noticed, and they were praised for minimizing their own intrusions on the process.

There was ample reason for women to conform to these expectations while on pilgrimage, as female pilgrims who chose not to maintain their silence and invisibility could pay an uncomfortable price. Pilgrimage groups were quite content to abandon women whose presence they found annoying. Fabri and his fellows, for example, abandoned the Fleming woman on the island of Rhodes. She went on an excursion to a local church because she did not think the galley would sail that day. The galley did indeed sail, and without the Fleming woman. Despite his staunch defense of the six matrons, on this occasion Fabri admitted, "except her husband, no one was sorry at the absence of this woman, because she had rendered herself odious beyond measure by her silly talk and her inquisitive prying into unprofitable matters."[100] He softened somewhat when she caught up with the pilgrims in a boat. He observed that the other pilgrims were not happy about her return, but extended his sympathy for "the straits to which she had been put by the sailing of the vessel."[101]

Vindictiveness on the part of the other pilgrims may not have caused this situation. Sir Richard Guylforde, an English noble who completed his pilgrimage in 1509, noted that a number of pilgrims in his group were left behind on the island of Mylo because, as they were off exploring the island with the captain's blessing, the first fair wind in many days came up, and the captain was obliged to leave immediately.[102] But

[100] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 190; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 169: "quia extra civitatem ad quandum (sic) ecclesiam evagata fuerat, non existimans, galeam hoc die recedere. De illius autem mulieris nemo tristis erat absentia, nisi maritus ejus, quia fecerat se ultra modum odiosum suis fatuis locutionibus et curiosis indagationibus rerum inutilium."

[101] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 201; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 178: "De cujus ingressu parvum gaudium erat. Compatiebar tamen misellae propter angustias ejus ex recessu navis perpessas."

[102] Richard Guylforde, *The Pylgrymage of Sir Richarde Guylforde Knyght and controuler unto our late soveraygne lorde kynge Henry the Vii and howe he went with his servaunts and company towardes Jherusalem* (n.p., 1511), 91.

other evidence from Fabri at least suggests the possibility that leaving the Fleming woman behind was intended to be a punitive action. On Fabri's first pilgrimage with the ancient matrons, a pregnant noblewoman was also aboard. Fabri makes little mention of her, possibly because she, like the other nobles, would have had separate housing in the forecastle cabins of the galley, and would therefore have been completely segregated from most of the pilgrims.[103] After a bout of bad weather and seasickness aboard ship, the galley rested in the city of Lesina for three days, in order to avoid a dangerous wind, and also "to recruit the strength of the pregnant lady, who had suffered much and became very weak during the gale."[104] If the entire galley was willing to wait for this woman, who was noble and also invisible, to recuperate, then the abandonment of the "odious" Fleming woman begins to seem intentional.

Kempe's fellow-pilgrims, who deeply resented her flamboyant devotions, abandoned her twice. When her party arrived in the city of Constance, they met with a papal legate, to whom her companions complained about Margery's weeping, unwillingness to eat meat, and obsessively pious conversation. The legate supported Kempe, and the party left her and her money with him, refusing to travel further with her. Much to her annoyance, the party also kept her maid, "notwithstanding she [the maid] had promised her mistress and assured her that she should not forsake her for any need."[105] The party later agreed to let Kempe rejoin them, in return for her promise that she would leave off her religious ramblings and vegetarianism. She failed to keep the promise. While her companions did not abandon her again until they had seen her safely back to Venice, they punished her annoying behavior in a number of other ways, if her complaints are to be believed. She wrote that they excluded her from eating with them, stole her sheets, tried to bar her from going with them to the Jordan River,

[103] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 128; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 119.

[104] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 41; also "Evagatorium," vol. II, 56: "…et etiam mansimus propter dominae praegnantis et gravidae refocillationem, quae valde fuerat in illis tempestatibus infirmata; mirum est quod non fuit mortua simul cum foetu in tantis terroribus."

[105] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, Chapter 27, 47; also *Book*, ed. Meech, 64: "…notwythstondyng sche had behestyd hir maystres & sekyrd hir þat sche xulde not forsake hir for no nede."

refused to help her climb Mount Quarantine, and denied her a share of their water.[106]

It is tempting to write off Kempe's experiences as singular, the consequence of her ostentatious, nonconformist, and apparently obnoxious devotional behavior.[107] Voaden has even suggested that her literary focus on her fellow-pilgrims' abuses was the result of her desire to suffer as a form of *imitatio Christi*.[108] Whether she welcomed such treatment or not, Margery did make clear that she experienced unusual and dramatic spiritual gifts, and most notably in Jerusalem the gift of tears, leading to such episodes as this: "she fell down and cried with a loud voice, wonderfully twisting and turning her body on every side, spreading her arms abroad as if she should have died."[109] Or: "she . . . spreading her arms abroad, and cried with a loud voice as though her heart should have burst asunder."[110] In sum, her personality was abrasive and her behavior strange, and therefore Kempe's woes seem like a questionable representation of women's experiences. Indeed, her overwhelmingly visible and audible devotions have left even modern scholars struggling to understand her. A significant number of scholars have insisted that she was insane.[111] One has tried to diagnose her with Tourette's

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[106] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, Chapter 28, 49, and Chapter 29, 54; also *Book*, ed. Meech, 66–67, 74.

[107] On Kempe's rearrangement of preexisting patterns of devotion, see Michael Vandussen, "Betokening Chastity: Margery Kempe's Sartorial Crisis," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 41, no. 3 (2005): 275–288, and Liliana Sikorska, "Between penance and purgatory: Margery Kempe's *Pélerinage de la vie humaine* and the idea of salvaging journeys," in *Beowulf and Beyond*, ed. Hans Sauer and Renate Bauer (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007), 242.

[108] Rosalynn Voaden, "Travels with Margery: Pilgrimage in Context," in *Eastward bound: Travel and travellers, 1050–1550*, ed. Rosamund Allen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 185–186.

[109] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, Chapter 28, 51–2; also *Book*, ed. Meech, 70: "…þan sche fel down & cryed with lowde voys, wondyrfully turnyng & wrestyng hir body on euery syde, spredyng hir armys a-brode as ȝyf she xulde a deyd…"

[110] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, Chapter 28, 50; also *Book*, ed. Meech, 68: "sche…walwyd & wrestyd with hir body, spredyng hir armys a-brode, & cryed with a lowed voys as þow hir hert xulde a brostyn a-sundyr."

[111] For examples, see Phyllis Weissman, "Margery Kempe in Jerusalem: *Hysterica Compassio* in the Late Middle Ages,' in *Acts of Interpretation: The Text in its Contexts, 700–1600*, ed. Mary J. Carruthers and Elizabeth D. Kirk (Norman: Pilgrim Books, 1982); Phyllis R. Freeman, Carly Rees Bogorad, and Diane E. Sholomskas, "Margery Kempe, A New Theory: The Inadequacy of Hysteria and Postpartum Psychosis as Diagnostic Categories," *History of Psychiatry* 1, no. 2 (1990): 169–90; Nancy F. Partner, "Reading *The Book of Margery Kempe*," *Exemplaria* 3 (1991): 29–66; and Richard Lawes, "The madness of Margery Kempe," in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition: England, Ireland, and Wales*, ed. Marion Glasscoe (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), 147–167.

Syndrome.[112] Feminist scholars, in contrast, have "hailed Margery as the bold practitioner of an alternative, matriarchal, feminine kind of spirituality."[113] The diversity of modern opinions about the genesis of Kempe's behavior mirrors the confusion of her contemporaries, whose responses to her have been accurately described as "fragmented."[114]

But contemporary sources confirm that Kempe's devotional expression was not unique. Indeed, the sole extant copy of Kempe's *Book* contains marginal notations indicating that some of the Carthusians of Mount Grace Priory, who owned the manuscript, experienced similar spiritual gifts.[115] Richard Kieckhefer has pointed out that "many of Kempe's unconventional behaviors had themselves become conventional on the Continent, and those most receptive to her were often those who knew of the Continental conventions."[116] Nor were these behaviors unusual for laypersons in the context of the Jerusalem pilgrimage. Fabri, who in other cases praised the silence of female pilgrims, seemed unsurprised by physical and vocal displays of piety from both men and women during their visit to the Holy Sepulcher. After describing the pilgrims' performance of repentance, which included sobbing, throwing themselves to the ground, and beating their breasts, he singled out the women

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[112] Nancy P. Stork, "Did Margery Kempe Suffer From Tourette's Syndrome?" *Mediaeval Studies* 59 (1997): 261–300.

[113] Some of the works in this vein include Clarissa W. Atkinson, *Mystic and Pilgrim: The Book and the World of Margery Kempe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Karma Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991); Sandra J. McEntire, ed., *Margery Kempe: A Book of Essays* (New York: Garland, 1992); Sarah Beckwith, "A Very Material Mysticism: The Medieval Mysticism of Margery Kempe," in *Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Jane Chance (Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 1996), 195–215; Morrison, *Women Pilgrims*, 138; and Liz Herbert McAvoy, "Virgin, Mother, Whore: The Sexual Spirituality of Margery Kempe," in *Intersections of Sexuality and the Divine in Medieval Culture: The Word Made Flesh*, ed. Susannah Mary Chewning (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 121–140.

[114] Kathleen Ashley, "Historicizing Margery: *The Book of Margery Kempe* as Social Text," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 28, no. 2 (1998): 371–88, 375.

[115] Wendy Harding, "Body into Text: *The Book of Margery Kempe*," in *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, ed. Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 183–184.

[116] Richard Kieckhefer, "Convention and Conversion: Patterns in Late Medieval Piety," *Church History* 67, no. 1 (1998): 41. Similar observations have been made by Janette Dillon, "Holy Women and their Confessors or Confessors and their Holy Women? Margery Kempe and the Continental Tradition," in *Prophets Abroad: The Reception of Continental Holy Women in Late-Medieval England*, ed. Rosalynn Voaden (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1996), 115–140, and Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa, "Searching for the Image of the New Ecclesia: Margery Kempe's Spiritual Pilgrimage Reconsidered," *Medieval Perspectives* 11 (1996): 125–138.

for special attention: "above all our companions and sisters the women pilgrims *shrieked as though in labor, cried aloud and wept*."[117] (Emphasis mine). Kempe was not the only women, nor even the only pilgrim, to weep and wail at important pilgrimage sites. Her performances, however, were not contained within these generally accepted group expressions of contrition and piety; nor was her visionary activity limited to the closed household of a professed religious. As Dyas has noted, Margery "cannot perceive any difficulty in taking experiences which were supposed to belong within the cloister or the anchorite's cell out on the road with her, as she deals with the stresses of daily life in East Anglia, and as she travels far and wide in search of holy places."[118] Thus, she was punished by her fellow travelers for her unwillingness to conform to their demands for her invisibility in non-sacral contexts.

And although Kempe was particularly vocal, even women who maintained their silence risked abandonment. Fabri recorded an incident at the Jordan River involving the six matrons, whom he had so often praised for their modesty. When the group left the Jordan, one of the matrons was accidentally left behind. The remaining five matrons raised a hue and cry and begged the rest of the group to stop and wait while they searched for her. The group was as divided over this rescue effort as they had been when the matrons joined the galley; some joined the search, and "some rough and hard-hearted knights grumbled at the whole host being thrown into confusion for the sake of one old woman, and had their advice been followed, we should have quite given up the old woman for lost." More generous opinions prevailed, and the missing

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[117] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 283–84; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 239: "Super omnes autem mulieres peregrinae sociae nostrae et sorores quasi parturientes clamabant, ullulabant et flebant." The same correspondence between Margery's devotional behavior and that of Fabri's matrons has been noted in Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa, *Margery Kempe's Meditations: The Context of Medieval Devotional Literature, Liturgy and Iconography* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), 50. It has also been mentioned by Weissman, "Margery Kempe in Jerusalem," 215, who argues that such 'hysterical' behavior was the result of medieval patriarchy; she failed to note, however, that Fabri described *all* the pilgrims, men and women, as engaging in such behavior.

[118] Dee Dyas, *Pilgrimage in Medieval English Literature, 700–1500* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), 223. For further discussion of Margery's pilgrimage and her reevaluations of space and her location within it, see Diane Watt, "Faith in the Landscape: Overseas Pilgrimages in *The Book of Margery Kempe*," in *A Place to Believe In: Locating Medieval Landscapes*, ed. Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 170–187.

matron was found and "received with joy."[119] Again, those who resented the presence of these women were quite willing to punish them by leaving one of their number behind; only the allies that the matrons had won through their modesty prevented their missing companion from being abandoned as Margery or the Fleming woman were.

Femininity as Asset in Pilgrimage Groups

Female pilgrims employed a variety of strategies to cope with the antipathy of male pilgrims. These attempts to reinterpret female pilgrims to Jerusalem or Rome, like those used by women who sought the shrines of the saints, were founded in an attempt to conform to or appropriate normative female roles. For example, women pilgrims often conformed to the demands for their invisibility to the greatest extent possible. This strategy did more than protect female pilgrims from unpleasant attention. If women were able to remain little seen and little heard-from, there was a chance that they might earn respect from some of their companions. Fabri's support for the six matrons was often couched in praise of their displays of humility and meekness. Indeed, he even went so far as to favorably compare their quiet behavior to the rowdiness of the male pilgrims. When the pilgrims on his first journey went to bathe in the river Jordan, a few of the male pilgrims were nearly drowned because they took foolish risks in the swift current, trying to prove their strength. Fabri held up in contrast the positive example of the matrons, "who bathed among the reeds with modesty, silence, and devotion, and far more sedately than we."[120] As we have seen, this silence earned the matrons a reputation for piety—and desperately-needed support in moments of difficulty.

The case of the Fleming woman has shown that women were expected to keep the company of other women for the sake of propriety.

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[119] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vols. 9 & 10, 32–3; also "Evagatorium" vol. III, 51–52: "…quamvis aliqui milites rudes et crudeles murmurarent, quod propter unam vetulam totus exercitus inquietaretur, et si quis secutus fuisset eorum consilium, vetulam illam omnino dimisissemus in perditione…Accepta autem cum gaudio est matrona…"

[120] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vols. 9 & 10, 19; also "Evagatorium" vol. III, 41: "…quae supra nos in arundinibus etiam balneantur cum pudore, silentio, devotione et cum maturitate, multo magis quam nos."

Sensibly enough, women pilgrims often stuck together. Many women who set out for Rome or Jerusalem traveled in groups, like the six women who went on Fabri's first pilgrimage. Even the seemingly fearless Kempe extracted a promise of companionship from her female maid, and was furious when the maid abandoned her in order to remain with the rest of their group.[121] The frustration of the men on board Fabri's galley when "one woman (had) to dwell alone amongst so many noblemen"[122] even had a direct inverse. The reason that no women were originally on board ship for Fabri's second pilgrimage was that another ship captain, Master Augustine, "had gathered together all the women on board his galley."[123] Pilgrim galleys, by the late fifteenth century, could hold up to one hundred passengers. While the records that could tell us the proportion of women on Agostino Contarini's pilgrim-galley in 1483 are lost to us, even a sizable minority of women would suggest perhaps thirty or more women traveling together as part of the larger group.[124]

This mode of conforming to gender roles—shielding women through numbers—might even be enacted in cases where it was not planned in advance. Margery Kempe, for example, joined the pilgrim retinue of a noblewoman she had never met before, Madam Florentine, on her way to Rome. Madam Florentine was traveling "with her many Knights of Rhodes, her gentlewomen and much good conveyance."[125] The same noblewoman later found that Kempe was in dire financial straits in Rome, and saw to it that Kempe had enough to eat.[126] It is especially interesting to note that the gender connection between Kempe and Florentine bridged such a variety of differences. Kempe was not a noblewoman, yet was adopted into a noblewoman's retinue. The two women did not even share a common language, and yet Florentine felt a responsibility to help out another female pilgrim in distress.

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[121] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, Ch. 27, 47.

[122] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 166; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 149–150.

[123] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 166; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 150: "…sed Dominus Augustinus patronus alterius galeae omnes mulieres in suam galeam collegerat."

[124] Newett, introduction to *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem*, 43, notes that these records are missing.

[125] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, Chapter 31, 58; also *Book*, ed. Meech, 79: "Hir name was Margaret Florentyne & sche had with hir many Knygtys of Roodys, many gentylwomen, & mekyl good caryage."

[126] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, Chapter 38, 68; also *Book*, ed. Meech, 93.

Female pilgrims could do more than remain quiet, stick together, and hope for the best, however. They also attempted to influence their fellow-travelers' interpretation of their role by offering them the caregiving they might normally render to their families. During their journey, male pilgrims had need of the services customarily provided by the mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, or female servants they had left behind. Usually, they obtained such services from women who lived along their route. Arnold von Harff, a German knight from Cologne who went on pilgrimage in 1496, included short phrasebooks in his narrative, teaching his readers how to request a variety of feminine services in the languages he encountered on his overland journeys to Jerusalem and Compostela. He included the word for 'a woman' in each language, and his list of important phrases includes such requests and comments as these, all taken from the section in Greek:

> Kyratza gamysso sena ego? Woman, shall I marry you?
> Kyrasche nazis gymati metosena. Good woman, let me sleep with you.
> Kyrasche ego me panda dycosso. Woman, I am already in your bed.[127]

Von Harff recorded ways in which to proposition women sexually in five different languages, including Arabic and Hebrew. He also provided the vocabulary needed to ask for food and other personal services, including phrases in Albanian, Turkish, and Breton requesting that his shirt be washed.[128] Other narratives also record the presence of a service industry made up mostly of local women everywhere along the traditional pilgrim's routes. Leonardo Frescobaldi commented on the presence of "a great number of low-class women, very great merchantresses" between Alexandria and Cairo.[129] Such "merchantresses" might offer any or all of the services that von Harff taught his readers how to request. Fabri, for example, warned that the wary pilgrim must be careful of which inns he chooses along the way, as "no one receives German pilgrims into his house save the keepers of houses of

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[127] Arnold von Harff, *The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff, Knight, from Cologne through Italy, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Ethiopia, Nubia, Palestine, Turkey, France, and Spain, which he accomplished in the years 1496 to 1499*, trans. Malcom Letts (London, Hakluyt Society, 1946), 90–91.

[128] Von Harff, *Pilgrimage*, 77, 249, and 284.

[129] Leonardo Frescobaldi, "The Pilgrimage of Leonardo Frescobaldi," in *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine, and Syria in 1384 by Frescobaldi, Gucci, and Sigoli*, ed. and trans. Theophilus Bellorini and Eugene Hoade (Jerusalem: The Franciscan Press, 1948), 45.

ill-fame, who for the most part are Germans."[130] Nevertheless, he later mentioned the German madame of a brothel in Crete, who sent the prostitutes away upon the pilgrims' arrival, opining that she was "a well-mannered, respectful, and discreet woman, and (she) obtained all that we needed for us in great quantity."[131]

But Fabri's narrative shows that female pilgrims, if present, could also render some of these caregiving services to male pilgrims. While serving their fellow pilgrims broached their protective invisibility, it also proved to their male counterparts that they had a definable purpose, and thereby overcame negative views of their presence (however briefly). The six matrons braved visibility when most of the pilgrims on board their galley became seasick, and Fabri told the tale with partisan relish:

> We . . . cast ourselves down on our beds, very sick; and the number of the sick became so great, that there was no one to wait upon them and furnish them with necessaries. Howbeit, those ancient matrons, seeing our miseries, were moved with compassion, and ministered to us, for there was not one of them that was sick. Herein God, by the strength of these old women, confounded the valor of those knights, who at Venice treated them with scorn, and had been unwilling to sail with them. They moved to and fro throughout the galley from one sick man to another, and ministered to those who had mocked and scorned them as they lay stricken down on their beds.[132]

Fabri here lionized the women as caregivers to the sick, and in so doing transformed the behavior of women who wandered—figures who often invited attack—into the height of feminine virtue. The ability of the matrons to nurse the sick excused even mobility and visibility, but it is particularly remarkable because the matrons were unwelcome ever to leave their bunks during the journey, and so had been confined in

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[130] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 163; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 147: "Et nemo peregrinos theutonicos recipit in domum suam, nisi lenones; qui ut in plurimum sunt Theutonici . . ."

[131] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 188; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 167: "Erat autem mulier illa urbana et reverentialis, et discreta, et omnia nobis necessaria procuravit abunde . . ."

[132] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 26; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 43: "Sed et nos, . . . in lectulos decidimus aegritudinis magnae: et adeo multiplicati fuerunt infirmi, quod servitores non erant, qui necessaria cupita infirmis ministrarent. Videntes autem antiquae vetulae matronae necessitatem nostram, motae super nos misericordia nobis servierunt; non enim erat aliqua inter eas infirma. In quo facto confudit Deus in robore illarum vetularum fortitudinem illorum militum, qui Venetiis eas spernebant, cum eisque navigare refugiebant. Discurrebant autem per galeam de uno infirmo ad alterum et suis spretoribus derisoribus in lectulis prostratis serviebant."

an unhealthy environment more than their male counterparts. They may, however, have been grateful for the opportunity to prove themselves useful, and thereby to ease some of the tensions created by their presence.

Female pilgrims also served a purpose for their male counterparts in a less direct fashion, one that, although outside of their control, nevertheless earned them some social leverage. Supportive commentators turned women who endured the particularly difficult status of female pilgrim into exempla, using them as concrete examples of exceptionally virtuous behavior, sent by God to teach their male companions. It was clear throughout Fabri's account that he considered the matrons an excellent exemplum. In order to use them in this way, he emphasized their fragility when he introduced them into the narrative. He described them as "old women, who through old age were scarcely able to support their own weight, yet forgot their own frailty, and through love of the Holy Land joined themselves to young knights and underwent the labors of strong men."[133] This interpretation of their pilgrimage as unusually risky and hence unusually penitent deeply affected some of their male counterparts, who sought to have them join the group in the hopes that their extraordinary spiritual rigor would encourage God to protect the galley.[134] No doubt some of these same men later supported the matrons when one of them was lost at the Jordan River. Even Kempe was able to use social leverage based on the belief that God especially favored her penitence. After her party abandoned her in Germany, she arrived in Bologna before they did. Based on the speed of her travel, one member of her former group became convinced that she must have God's favor, and helped her to rejoin them.[135]

This use of female pilgrims as exempla created a logical conundrum for the author who wrote about them. He had to emphasize their good behavior—their silence and invisibility—in the process of putting them on a pedestal; he had to emphasize their weakness as women, but also

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[133] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 11; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 31: "…illarum vetularum, quae se ipsas prae senio ferre vix poterant, et tamen fragilitatis propriae oblitae, amore illius sanctae terrae in consortium militum juvenum se ingerebat, et laborem fortium virorum subibant."

[134] Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 11; also "Evagatorium" vol. II, 31–2: "Sed alii milites prudentiores et conscientiosi contradicebant superbis illis, et gaudebant de poenitentia illarum matronarum, sperantes, quod propter devotionem earum navigatio nostra salubrior fieret."

[135] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, Chapter 27, 48.

their strength as pilgrims. Fabri navigated these contrary expectations magnificently in his descriptions of the six matrons; in so doing, he provides us with another concrete example of female pilgrims whose journey was commendable, and even elevated them to an unusually high spiritual status. There was a hint of this use of the matron's story in his description of how they nursed the sick, but he made them the subject of an impromptu sermon when he described the arduous journey from the Jordan back to Jerusalem through the desert. This 'sermon' is worth quoting at length:[136]

> But during all these labors our fellow-pilgrims and comrades, the ancient ladies, outdid all of us, wrested the first place from the knights, neither groaned nor bewailed their toils, but went on first in the whole line of march, stronger than men and braver than knights. These old ladies struck great shame into us by their endurance; indeed, a knight said to me 'lo! My brother, I don't believe these old creatures to be women at all, but devils, for women, especially old women, are frail, tender, and delicate, whereas these women are made of iron, and are stronger than all us knights.' . . . . Whence, however, could power have come to weaklings, and strength to women, save from Him who hath chosen the weak things of the world to unfound the strong, and who set these women above the men, that none of him might boast of his sex, his strength, his beauty, his youth, or his noble birth—? For these women were neither men, nor strong, nor beauteous, nor noble, yet they underwent without fainting all the labours whereby knighthood is gained. Herein God confounded the pride of those knights who had scorned these ladies for companions . . . .

Here Fabri made the matrons serve their male companions as a lesson in humility. He dismissed the women's endurance as none of their doing; instead, they are simply tools used by God to set a positive example. Indeed, this is the only way Fabri was able to explain how

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[136] Fabri, "Wanderings," Stewart, vol. 9 & 10, 67–8; also "Evagatorium," vol. III, 79–80: "Sed in his omnibus comperegrinae et sociae nostae annosae vetulae antecedebant nos, praeripientes loca militum, et nec gemebant, nec conquerebantur de labore, sed fortiores viris et militibus adaciores primae in acie procedebant. Magnam verecundiam faciebant nobis istae vetulae sua infatigabilitate, unde quidam miles dixit mihi: ecce, frater, non credo has vetulas esse foeminas, sed daemones sunt, mulieres enim, praesertim annosae, sunt fragiles, tenerae et delicatae, istae autem sunt ferreae, cunctis militibus fortiores. . . . Sed unde fragilibus fortitudo, mulieribus robur, nisi ab eo, qui infirma mundi eligit, ut confundat fortia, qui praetulit eas viris, ne quis glorietur de sexu, de fortitudine, pulchritudine, juventute et de nobilitate. Siquidem nec ipsae erant viri, nec fortes, nec pulchrae, nec nobiles, et tamen omnes labores peregerunt sine defectu, per quos militia acquiritur. Et in hoc confudit Deus superbiam illorum militum, qui eas dedignabantur habere socias . . ."

old women, whom he understood to be naturally frail (despite their hardiness during the bout of seasickness), could be so strong. Fabri's support for the women did not stem from an understanding of them as spiritually worthy in their own right, but rather from the ways in which he perceived the divine speaking to the male pilgrims through their actions. At the same time, however, he elevated the women to a spiritual status higher than that of the knights around them, because they were vessels of divine strength, and they were serving God by setting a positive example. He also portrays them as engaging in an *imitatio sancti*: their valorous exertions imitated the heroism of the saints, who, like Christ himself, suffered for God beyond the limits of normal endurance. As such, the interpretation of the matrons advanced by Fabri and the "gentler" knights generated enough approbation that the women were able to remain with the group, and even recruit help in moments of distress. This social support allowed them to apply their strength, wherever it may have come from, to the devotional endeavor they had chosen for themselves.

Conclusions

Despite the assertions of some scholars that pilgrimage was an inclusive group endeavor which created 'communitas' that could temporarily change, or at least harmonize, traditional social relations, women who chose to undertake devotional pilgrimage were clearly treated as unwelcome additions to most devotional pilgrimage groups. This stands in stark contrast to their common participation in localized miracle cults. Far less space was made for women to travel to Rome or Jerusalem for the well-being of their souls than was made for them to seek miracles of healing or to participate in other, more routine elements of medieval Christian ritual. Their presence on such journeys was barely tolerated by their male counterparts, who, at best, demanded their silence and invisibility until their caregiving skills were needed, and at worst, abandoned them. Those few male authors who supported the presence of women on devotional pilgrimages (as long as they maintained their silence and modesty) were apt to make exempla of them, explaining their presence as an example or warning to male pilgrims. Hence, women were excluded from the social milieu of pilgrimage as much as possible, both during the journey and at the shrines at journey's end.

What is remarkable about this state of affairs is that such unpleasant conditions seem not to have kept women from becoming devotional pilgrims entirely. By bargaining for permission to go or waiting until widowed, by using invisibility, caregiving skills, and numbers as a shield during the trip, women were able to achieve an intangible spiritual goal that offered benefit to no one but themselves. Thus, the very presence of female pilgrims on the road to Jerusalem or Rome presented an obvious target for those who mistrusted the intentions of women who wandered. Those who did support women's journeys and who left us written accounts rebutting misogynist attacks, phrased their praise in terms similar to those which appeared in miracle stories. Like mothers seeking miracles for children, women on the road to Jerusalem cared for others and set a good example, and as a result could be elevated to a new and saint-like spiritual status. Interpreted as frail vessels imbued with God's strength, such women were cast not as wanderers, but instead divine messengers, sent to teach humility to male pilgrims. Even so, each real journey was a self-centered act of Christian devotion, and while medieval people approved of devout women, they were far more comfortable when that devotion, like all women's efforts, was somehow made to serve others.

CHAPTER FIVE

"SHE WAS BROUGHT TO THE SHRINE BY FORCE:" WOMEN AND COMPULSORY PILGRIMAGE

In 1312, Julienne, the wife of Vincent Vertellier, received five men and their companions into her home. She offered food, drink, and beds to these men, "and she herself ate and drank with them at the same table."[1] The men were Waldensians, and not only had she offered the peripatetic heretics aid and comfort, she had also listened to them, prayed with them, exchanged gifts with them, thrice confessed her sins to them, and "believed that the Waldensians were good and sincere men, that they had true faith and a good sect in which she and other adherents could be saved, and she believed this for six years or thereabouts."[2] She was convicted of this heresy in 1319 by the Inquisition of Carcasonne, who required her to do the thing that Margery Kempe would struggle to do a century later: make pilgrimages. Ten years after Julienne was sentenced to visit twenty different French shrines, another young woman was forced into pilgrimage in the countryside south of Bologna. Having eaten a pear without first making the sign of the cross, Prixiata Jacobs became "possessed, and engaged in the behaviors of the possessed, going here and there, and going without senses and intellect."[3] Her relatives escorted her to the shrine of St. Simone da Todi in Bologna. According to the text of the miracle story, she was taken on this forty-mile journey, "by force."[4]

As we have seen, female pilgrims and their pilgrimages were interpreted in a variety of ways. The practice and the practitioners both

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[1] Annette Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences de l'inquisiteur Bernard Gui, 1308–1323* (Paris, CNRS Editions, 2002) vol. II, 1080: "…et ipsa comedit et bibit cum eis in eadem mensa."

[2] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. II, 1080: "Item credidit dictos Valdenses esse bonos homines et veraces et habere bonam fidem et bonam sectam in qua ipsi et alii qui tenerent eam possent salvari et fuit in illa credencia per sex annos vel circa."

[3] "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 825: "erat daemoniata, & opera daemoniata faciebat, eundo huc & illuc, & eundo sine sensu & intellectu…"

[4] "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 825: "Ducta fuit ad supulturam B. Simonis per vim…"

served as multivalent symbols which groups and individuals adopted and shaped to meet their own needs. Female pilgrims might be fashioned into predators, prey, intercessors or quasi-saints. This remarkable flexibility in the meanings of pilgrimage in the later Middle Ages made room for blanket condemnation of female pilgrims by satirists, but simultaneously made it reasonable to compel women who were out of their minds, and those who were heretics, to become pilgrims. Women such as Prixiata and Julienne, who were understood to have wandered into metaphysical danger without even leaving their homes, were forced to walk a straight and narrow path in order to restore their well-being and to demonstrate that restoration for their communities. In this chapter, I explore these compulsory pilgrimages, which were carried out within the context of an entirely different relationship between the female pilgrim and the power structures that surrounded her than voluntary pilgrimages were. As such, the rituals of compulsory pilgrimage differentiated compulsory pilgrims from other sorts. But even in cases where a woman's pilgrimage was forced, rather than self-willed, it was possible for her to help shape both the events of the journey and the shared interpretations of those events.

The Sources

This chapter will rely on two distinct bodies of sources. In order to explore the question of pilgrimages assigned as penance by ecclesiastical courts, I have chosen to look into the records of the papal inquisitions. These proceedings were based on a Roman legal model wherein the state could seek out a potential crime, rather than pursuing only those charges brought to the state's attention by injured parties. By the later Middle Ages, inquests were coming to replace accusatory procedure in both canon and civil law.[5] In the twelfth century, with the appearance in Latin Christendom of several organized heresies whose members actively proselytized on behalf of their beliefs, the papacy

[5] On the commonplace nature of inquisitorial procedure, see Richard Keickhefer, *Repression of Heresy in Medieval Germany* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979) 3–8; Henry Ansgar Kelly, "Inquisition and the Prosecution of Heresy: Misconceptions and Abuses," *Church History* 58, no. 4 (December 1989): 439–451, esp. 441; and Edward Peters, *Inquisition* (Berkeley: University of California at Los Angeles Press, 1988), 52.

began to appoint inquisitors who were charged to stamp out heresy in particular regions.[6] Papal inquisitors, who were often members of mendicant orders, were empowered to seek out possible heretics, question them, prosecute them, adjudicate their cases, and then sentence convicted heretics to penances ranging from penitential fasting to de facto death sentences.[7]

"The Inquisition" had no central office nor any standing officers, but instead consisted of specific commissions granted to individual inquisitors by the Pope.[8] Similarly, there were no centralized standards of sentencing for use by inquisitors.[9] Instead, each inquisition was an individual mission, very much shaped by the inquisitors appointed in that particular time and place.[10] Still, inquisitors did share certain things: they worked according to a common legal procedure; they had direct papal backing; they exchanged information about their work in a shared body of inquisitor's manuals; and they adhered to a common belief that their goal of stamping out heterodoxy was both spiritually righteous and socially necessary.[11] Inquisitors could assign a variety of penances to those they convicted, pilgrimage among them. Although the practice of assigning penitential pilgrimages was fading in the later Middle Ages—indeed, the wisdom of handing down such a sentence

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[6] For concise descriptions of the early formation of the papal inquisitions, see Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) 100–104; Peters, *Inquisition*, Ch. 2; or Bernard Hamilton, *The Medieval Inquisition* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1983), Ch. 3.

[7] Peters, *Inquisition*, 56–7; Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, Chs. 2 and 3; on extension of punishment to innocent heirs through confiscation of property, see Kenneth Pennington, "'Pro Peccatis Patrum Puiniri': A Moral and Legal Problem of the Inquisition," *Church History* 47, no. 2 (June, 1978): 134–154.

[8] Peters, *Inquisition*, Ch. 2 chooses to refer to the phenomenon as 'inquisitors,' rather than the Inquisition; Keickhefer, *Repression of Heresy in Medieval Germany*, prefers instead to call the phenomenon "the inquisitions," and argues against a fully institutional model of the medieval heresy inquisitions.

[9] See Andrew P. Roach's description of the flexibility in sentencing in "Penance and the Making of the Inquisition in Languedoc," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 52, no. 3 (July, 2001): 409–433.

[10] See, for example, the local interactions between inquisitors and secular governments discussed in Alexander Murray, "The Medieval Inquisition: An Instrument of Secular Politics?" *Peritia* 5 (1986): 161–200. For an example of the local and unique nature of inquisitions, see Kathryn M. Karrer, "The New Albigensian Heretic: A Danger Closer to Home," *Medieval Perspectives* 4–5 (1991): 91–96.

[11] On handbooks, see Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 101; and Peters, *Inquisition*, 58–64. On the attitudes of the inquisitors about their work, see Christine Caldwell Ames, "Does the Inquisition Belong to Religious History?," *American Historical Review* 110, no. 1 (February, 2005): 11–37.

to women was questioned by none other than Thomas Aquinas—the heresy inquisitions in the Languedoc engaged in one of the later significant uses of penitential pilgrimage by an ecclesiastical court.[12]

The copious records of the inquisition of Bernard Gui, who sought the last vestiges of Catharism in the Languedoc between 1307 and 1323, are a particularly rich source. Gui, a Dominican papal inquisitor, was pursuing a small underground community of committed heretics, whose cases are easily comparable to one another.[13] Gui was also learned in inquisitorial procedure (even writing an inquisitor's manual of his own), and so his sentencing decisions can be regarded as relatively internally consistent.[14] Finally, his inquisitorial records provide both extensive detail about the crimes of those accused and convicted, and also list a sentence for each of the accused (information which some other inquisitorial records failed to preserve). In his *Liber Sententiae*, 302 persons were sentenced to or released from penitential pilgrimages; an exploration of the circumstances under which these penalties were applied, and how they were carried out, will form one of the bases of this chapter.

Compulsory pilgrimage also appears in collections of miracle stories. Only one sort of miraculous cure was associated with compulsory pilgrimage: those of the insane and the possessed. While medieval thinkers had quite distinct understandings of possession (a demon harbored in the body) and insanity (a condition related to bodily health, not metaphysical infestation), the miracles' authors used very similar descriptors for the two states, often describing such people, regardless of their diagnosis, as being *sine sensu et intellectu* ('without sense and thought'). At times the collaborative authors seem to have found it

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[12] Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), 112–113. It is important here to differentiate between pilgrimage's use by ecclesiastical and civil courts. While civil courts throughout Western Europe were also sometimes willing to use pilgrimage as a 'penance' for crimes, the line between a pilgrimage and outright banishment in such cases was blurry, and convicts could often pay fines in lieu of the journey. Such was generally not the case with the papal heresy inquisitions, which dealt with a specific group of crimes and believed in the penitential benefits of the journey itself. See Sumption, Ch. VII, passim.

[13] Hamilton, *The Medieval Inquisition*, 70.

[14] See Bernard Gui, *Manuel de l'inquisiteur*, ed. and trans. G. Mollat (Paris: Librairie ancienne honoré champion, 1926). Peters, *Inquisition*, 60, calls it "an elaborate work which summed up three quarters of a century of inquisitorial experience." See also Joseph A. Dane, "Inquisitorial hermeneutics and the manual of Bernard Gui," *Tenso: Bulletin of the Société Guilhelm IX* 4, no. 2 (1989): 59–76.

difficult to differentiate between madness and possession. The author of one of Dorthea of Montau's miracles offered a typically uncertain take on the matter when he recorded that a certain young woman "was thought insane and possessed by otherworldly spirits," and neglected to specify which diagnosis was correct.[15] Indeed, exorcism rituals of the period began with a discernment process, to prove that aberrant behavior was caused by a demon, rather than a mental illness.[16] Hence, Barbara Newman has called madness and possession "overlapping, but not interchangeable, categories."[17] However we attempt to relate the different diagnoses of those described as *sine sensu*, people categorized in both ways were frequently forced to take pilgrimages in order to solve the problem they posed for their families and communities.

Fifty-three miracle stories of the 711 which formed the basis of Chapter 3 record the pilgrimages of the *sine sensu*. It is necessary, however, to pare down this body of cases in order to discuss compulsory pilgrimage, as not all of those fifty-three were forced to make pilgrimages. Several were cured at home, and then voluntarily completed pilgrimages in thanksgiving for the help of their patrons. Others were intermittently unwell, and made their journeys by their own choice during periods of lucidity. But in twenty-two of the stories, which appear in six of the collections, a person described as either insane or possessed was taken to a shrine by caregivers.[18] Some of these stories are more specific than others about the sorts of force required to compel the demoniac or lunatic to visit a shrine, but all of them explain that the person 'was brought' or 'was led' rather than coming of his or her own volition. Taken together, the compulsory pilgrimages of women who were either convicted heretics or *sine sensu* provide us with yet another interpretation of women's participation in the pilgrimage process.

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[15] Richard Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau von 1394 bis 1521* (Vienna: Bohlau Verlag, 1978), 45: "…et putabatur insana et immundis spiritibus obsessa."

[16] Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 244–251.

[17] Barbara Newman, "Possessed by the Spirit: Devout Women, Demoniacs, and the Apostolic Life in the Thirteenth Century," *Speculum* 73, no. 3 (1998): 737.

[18] The miracles of Henry VI are the exception. He provided immediate, at-home cures for all demoniacs and insane persons, so their pilgrimages were all voluntary.

A Portrait of Wandering Souls

A modern observer might find it difficult to equate the cases of a lunatic and a heretic. In our world, one of these is helpless in the grip of an illness beyond his or her control, and the other is engaging in intellectual dissent by conscious choice. But for medieval communities, heretics and the behaviorally aberrant posed similar social and intellectual problems. Indeed, heresy was at times explained as having been caused by either possession or madness, and heretics were likened to demons in disguise; and there had been "a great variety of opinion, and a good deal of crossing back and forth between models," when high medieval writers took up the subject of the relationships between the three states.[19] That they should be treated similarly makes sense when one considers their ability to function within social groups. To begin with, although heretics, demoniacs, and the insane enacted their states in a variety of ways, in all cases, their actions were based upon "flawed," or non-normative, perceptions of reality. Heresy was, by definition, a flaw in the heretic's comprehension of matters metaphysical. The dualist Cathar heresy, of which most were accused during Bernard Gui's tenure in the Languedoc, differed radically from mainstream Christianity in matters as fundamental as the humanity of Christ, the effectiveness of clergy and of the sacraments, and the nature of human souls.[20] As medieval society admitted of only one possible truth in the comprehension of reality and mankind's place within it, these differences were a deadly serious matter. In the words of Walter Wakefield, heresy "had to be regarded as the most grievous sin and crime into which man could fall, for by denying the magistracy of the church which Christ had established . . . the heretic became a traitor to God himself."[21] If a heretic

[19] Sabine Flanagan, "Heresy, Madness and Possession in the High Middle Ages," in *Heresy in Transition: Transforming Ideas of Heresy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Ian Hunter, John Christian Laurson, and Cary J. Nederman (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 35. On heretics compared to demons, see Céline Vilandrau, "Inquisition et 'sociabilité cathare' d'après le registre de l'inquisiteur Geoffroy d'Ablis (1308–1309)," *Heresis* 34 (2001), 46.

[20] For an overview, see Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, Ch. 7; for an in-depth study, see Jean Duvernoy, *Le catharisme I: La religion des cathars* (Toulouse: Privat, 1976). More recently, Mark Gregory Pegg argued that they were not necessarily Cathars. See Pegg, "On Cathars, Albigenses, and good men of Languedoc," *Journal of Medieval History* 27 (2001) 181–195. However, he notes that the records do indicate a sense of community and of shared belief among many of the people Gui prosecuted.

[21] Walter L. Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade, and Inquisition in Southern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 16.

died in this sinful state, he or she would suffer eternally.[22] The possessed and the insane also failed to understand the world around them in an acceptable manner. The insane were consistently described as 'out of their senses and thoughts,' meaning that the person's perception (senses) and comprehension (thoughts) were not normal. Demons, meanwhile, were understood to inhabit the physical body and from that interior vantage point to confuse the senses, so that a demoniac's perceptions were out of line with reality.[23] As we shall see, miracle stories often described demoniacs as suffering from altered or limited perception of their surroundings.

As a result of these failures in understanding, heretics, demoniacs, and the insane interacted within established social hierarchies in a threatening or incomprehensible manner. A heretic's disagreement about the nature of the Divine was understood by church officials as a crime not only of thought but also of deed. A heretic's incorrect belief led her to act wrongly in both ritual and social contexts, rejecting the leadership of the established spiritual authorities, and substituting new authorities and communities for the old.[24] The *sine sensu*, as a result of their perceptual or cognitive problems, also engaged in illogical or dangerous actions. Miracle stories described behaviors as varied as those that might appear in today's psychology textbooks; the *sine sensu* were too sad to get out of bed, offered verbal communications incomprehensible to their communities, and engaged in seemingly random violence against themselves and others.[25]

Unlike more commonplace criminal threats, however, the *sine sensu*, and those heretics sent on pilgrimage as a corrective, were considered only partially culpable for this state of affairs. Hence, they posed real and threatening social problems, but these were problems which were not entirely of their own choosing. An insane person was thought to be incapable of controlling her behavior; as we have seen, she was understood to be 'out of her thoughts,' literally absent from the processes of consciousness. Scholastic theologian William of Auvergne argued in the early thirteenth century that the insane are helpless and ignorant, and "in insane men malign intent and desire to do harm are

[22] Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 6.
[23] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 193.
[24] Vilandrau, "Inquisition et 'sociabilité cathare,'" 39.
[25] See the summary discussion of symptoms in Michael Goodich, "Battling the devil in rural Europe: late medieval miracle collections," in *Lives and Miracles of the Saints: Studies in Medieval Latin Hagiography* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), XVI, 139–152.

far off."[26] That this haplessness was ascribed to the insane in concrete, as well as theoretical, contexts is reflected by medieval jurists' "lenient and even casual" approach to criminals who were judged to be insane at the time of their crimes.[27] Indeed, madness could even be used to defend someone against heresy, that most insidious of thought-crimes.[28] But some culpability remained. While the mad were not responsible for their actions, the fact of the madness itself was considered by many theologians to be a punishment for sin, and hence something its sufferers brought upon themselves.[29] Demoniacs, too, bore partial responsibility for their behaviors. Demons were thought to enter the body and then to fool the senses from within, causing states of delusion. Once the demon entered the body, these delusions were not within the power of the demoniac to control. However, theologians and doctors did assert that possession was a condition more common in persons who were spiritually open to it, because of a state of sinfulness, a lapse in devotion, or an inherent biological weakness.[30] Heresy, finally, was the most self-willed of these crimes. Indeed, the term itself stems from a word meaning 'choice.' Incorrect belief was understood as a conscious decision and as a sin of pride.[31] But as we shall see, those who were assigned pilgrimages as a punishment for this seemingly free choice were those who had made the better choice, in their penitence, to cooperate to combat heresy, or those who had obvious practical limitations on their choice to become heretics in the first place.

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[26] William of Auvergne, "De Universo," pars iii, caput iv.; in *Guilielmi Alverni Opera omnia* (Paris, 1674; repr., Frankfurt-am-Main: Minerva, 1963), vol. 1, 1020: "Verum insania hujusmodi non extinguit in eis, quemadmodum in furiosis hominibus, licet saevire eos faciat irrationabilius in hominibus, quam in se ipsos, hoc tamen faciunt, non quod faciant ignorantes, sed ex certa scientia, et deliberato studio malignandi; in furiosis autem hominibus longe est intentio malignandi et studium nocendi."

[27] Daniel N. Robinson, *Wild Beasts and Idle Humors: The Insanity Defense from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 71.

[28] Flanagan, "Heresy, Madness and Possession in the High Middle Ages," 41.

[29] Allen Thiher, *Revels in Madness: Insanity in Medicine and Literature* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999) 46. Stephen Harper, *Insanity, Individuals, and Society in Late-Medieval English Literature: The Subject of Madness* (Lewiston Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), 30–33.

[30] See the excellent discussion by Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, Ch. 4, "Breath, Heart, Bowels."

[31] Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 4. On the word "heresy" see Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade, and Inquisition*, 16. On heresy as a willful sin see Peters, *Inquisition*, 42–3; Ames, "Does Inquisition Belong to Religious History?," 19.

Compulsory pilgrims shared one final trait: heretics and the *sine sensu* all posed what was considered a genuine threat to extant social hierarchies, and hence to the well-being of the communities that were structured by those hierarchies. As such, the pilgrimages forced upon them were a combination of metaphysical cure and community policing. Heresy, believed to be a wholesale abandonment of the most fundamental of communities in the Latin west, that of Christians who aspired to salvation, terrified orthodox Christians with its destructive potential.[32] Worse yet, like any idea, heresy could move from person to person with ease. Heretical belief could and did pass through communities like a contagion, and church authorities believed that it was a contagion to which no Christian was wholly immune.[33] The Hugou family of Bugnac prés Tarabel, southeast of Toulouse, can provide us with an instructive example of the potential effectiveness of a single committed heretic, Pierre Raimond Hugou. Heresy moved though his household, in a pattern that appears in many inquisitorial records.[34] Between 1310 and 1319, Bernard Gui's inquisition convicted eight other members of his family of heresy (See Figure 15).

Just before 1306, Pierre Raimond went north to Limoges in search of heretical teaching, and he became a Cathar believer. He hosted heretical teachers in his home, and he helped to move them and their money about. For these crimes he was sentenced to strict imprisonment in 1306, chained in a tiny cell.[35] Later, in 1313, he was put to death for having continued in the heresy.[36] His punishments did not contain the spread of heretical ideas, however. His brother, Ponce, and sister-in-law, Brune, were also brought before the Inquisition in 1306 for hosting the heretics that Pierre Raimond had searched out in Limoges. They renounced their heresy after that inquest, but in 1310 they were

[32] Vilandrau, "Inquisition et 'sociabilité cathare'," 39.

[33] See the examples from the records of Jacques Fournier discussed by Emmanuel Le Roy Lauderie, *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1978), 26–27.

[34] See for example Lorenzo Paolini, "Domus e zona degli eretici: L'esempio di Bologna nel XIII secolo," *Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia* 35, no. 2 (1981): 371–387; Anne Brenon, "Le catharisme dans la famille en Languedoc aux XIII^{e} et XIV^{e} siécles d'après les sources inquisitoriales," *Heresis* 28 (1997): 39–62; and Vilandrau, "Inquisition et 'sociabilité cathare'," 53, 56.

[35] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 449. On strict imprisonment, see Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 70–71.

[36] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 846–853.

again convicted of hosting heretics; and worse, when the authorities had come looking for the heretic they were harboring in their home, Ponce ran off with the man, leaving Brune to cover for them both by lying about their whereabouts.[37] For this relapse, both Ponce and Brune were handed over to the secular authorities to be executed.

The home of the late Ponce and Brune had served as a meeting point where others could interact with heretics for four years, and through them the heresy spread yet further. It was at their house that their sister-in-law Raimonde, wife of Ponce's third brother, Pierre, was introduced to Catharism and came to believe. For this, and for lying about it, she was sentenced to a variety of pilgrimages in 1310. In 1312, Ponce and Brune's daughter, Lombarde, was sentenced to pilgrimages and yearly visits to two churches in Toulouse.[38] At the same time, Ponce's uncle, Bernard, was convicted of having received heretics in his home "many times" and having promised them that on his deathbed he would participate in the *consolamentum*, the sole Cathar sacrament.[39] For this he was sentenced to imprisonment, a sentence that was lightened in 1319. Bernard testified that he had learned his heretical views from Ponce. He had "heard Ponce Hugou recommend the heretics to him, and incited him to see them, and he (Bernard) conceded this to him. Then, afterwards, many times he saw three heretics in the house of the said Ponce and in a certain garden near to the house…"[40] Bernard, in turn, passed the heresy on to his father, Arnaud. Arnaud's testimony from his own conviction in 1319 showed that he was introduced to the sect through his son Bernard and his grandson Pierre Raimond.[41] Arnaud was sentenced to prison for the rest of his life. Finally, Pierre Raimond also helped to bring his third brother, Pierre, into the sect, whose teachers Pierre met and learned from at Ponce's house.[42] For this Pierre was condemned to imprisonment in 1312 (although under a somewhat less strict form than Pierre Raimond's).

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[37] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 523.
[38] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I , 628.
[39] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 682.
[40] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 682: "…audivit conmendari sibi a Poncio de Hugonibus hereticos inducendo eum quod vellet videre eos et concessit eidem. Item postmodum vidit pluries in domo dicti Poncii et in quodam orto prope dictam domum tres hereticos…"
[41] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. II, 1096.
[42] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 678–681.

This brief case study makes vividly clear why heretics were considered such an insidious threat. On the surface, the Hugou family was neither unusual nor threatening. But in the privacy of their homes, they harbored a spiritual and intellectual rebellion, one which they were more than willing to share. More frighteningly, it was a rebellion carried out by dint of simple visits back and forth among family members. It did not require anything beyond belief and private interactions to make one a fully-fledged heretic, or for heresy to meet its aims of recruitment. Heresy was a creeping, contagious, but hidden sin that wormed its way into people's interior lives, where it was difficult to pin down and eradicate. It seems no wonder that one of the weapons in the inquisitors' arsenal was that of destroying the houses of those known to have played host to heretical activity. Private homes and spaces were crucial to its survival.[43]

Demoniacs and the insane, on the other hand, engaged in a variety of more visible public behaviors that were perceived to be dangerous.[44] For example, women compelled to visit shrines because they were *sine sensu* were often physically violent. This violence might be enacted against others, as in the case of Margilia the daughter of Guillielmus, who "assaulted her mother and others" until St. Yves corrected the problem.[45] Elizabeth and Henry, a couple from Marienburgh in Pomerania, had a daughter who, as Elizabeth conducted her to the shrine of Dorthea of Montau, committed "many improprieties and injuries, and also slapped her in the face, saying the worst words to her."[46] These assaultive women were dangerous to those around them, but it was also common for a woman's violent impulses to be turned on herself. Agnes of Montepulciano cured an unnamed woman who needed to be restrained lest she fling herself about, and Birgitta of Sweden did

[43] Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 70.

[44] Newman, "Possessed by the Spirit," passim; Traugott K. Oesterreich, *Possession and Exorcism Among Primitive Races, in Antiquity, The Middle Ages, and Modern Times*, trans. D. Ibberson (New York: Causeway Books, 1974) Chs. II and II; and Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, Chapter 1.

[45] "De S. Yvo Presbytero Trecorii in Britannia Armorica," *Acta Sanctorum*, May IV, 572: "…quod in matrem & alios irruebat…"

[46] Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau*, 45: "…et in itinere ut fatuata se gessit multaque obprobria et inurias, etiam ipsam percutiendo in faciem et pessima verba sibi dicendo, dicte matri intulit…"

the same for a woman named Christina Coppir.[47] Of course, it was possible for demoniacs to target *both* self and others: Maria the daughter of Michael, a demoniac cured by St. Simone, was in such a state that "it was necessary that she be tied, so that she not be able to make wounds on herself or others."[48]

Some women *sine sensu* displayed a second sort of threatening behavior: their lack of rationality rendered them functionally useless to their households and families. A quirk of speech or action could perhaps be ignored, but a complete inability to carry out one's daily work posed a tremendous challenge to their communities, who relied heavily on their labor.[49] The incapacity of a person so affected is highlighted in Simone da Todi's restoration of Prixiata, who spent her time "going here and there and going without senses and intellect."[50] Her illness had literally sent her wandering, and the aimlessness of that wandering rendered her particularly useless. There were also cases where demons, rather than insanity, left their victims bereft of basic abilities. Sandra, a citizen of Bologna, was possessed for several months and manifested only strange behavior and an unwillingness to go to church, until, one day in February of 1323, she suddenly went completely blind.[51] Christina Coppir not only lost most of her vision, but also the ability to move.[52] Such women, impaired in body as well as mind, could not or simply did not carry out their daily duties in the household.

Heretics and the *sine sensu*, then, posed social problems that were

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[47] "De S. Agnete Virgine Ord. S. Dominici Monte-Politiani in Hertruria," *Acta Sanctorum* April II, 811; Isak Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte* (Stockholm: Uppsala, 1924–1931), 120.

[48] "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 825: "…& oportebat ligari, ut sibi & aliis nullam posset facere laesionem."

[49] On the importance of women's labor in the household economy, see for example Barbara Hanawalt, *The Ties that Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), esp. Ch. 9 and Ch. 13; Martha C. Howell, *Women, Production, and Patriarchy in Late Medieval Cities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), esp. Ch. 1; David Herlihy, *Opera Muliebria: Women and Work in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), esp. 186; Arnaldo Suso Melo, "Women and Work in the Household Economy: The Social and Linguistic Evidence from Porto, c. 1340–1450," in *The Medieval Household in Christian Europe, c. 850–c. 1550: Managing Power, Wealth, and the Body*, ed. Cordelia Beattie, Anna Maslakovic, and Sarah Rees Jones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 249–269; and Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society, 1300–1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[50] "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 825: "…eundo huc & illuc, & eundo sine sensu & intellectu…"

[51] "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 827. (#106).

[52] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 120.

serious and yet partially excusable, and so pilgrimage was in their cases used as a rehabilitative program. But in a remarkable inversion of the attacks on women's pilgrimages, compulsory pilgrimage was more often demanded of women than of men who posed the same problems. Recall that approximately three-fifths of all the *sine sensu* were female (33 cases). Women continue to comprise nearly three-fifths of the *sine sensu* who were compelled to become pilgrims (13 cases). This predominance of women among the *sine sensu* is remarkable when compared to rates of healing of women overall; among all the sick and injured who were considered in Chapter 3, only two-fifths were female (See Figure 8). Furthermore, the problem was diagnosed quite differently in women than it was in men. Women were far more likely to be diagnosed as possessed rather than insane, and men as insane rather than possessed. Thus, demoniacs compelled to go on pilgrimage were overwhelmingly female, and female demoniacs alone comprised nearly half of the *sine sensu* compelled to visit shrines (See Figure 16).

Furthermore, the way in which the compulsion was carried out in cases of the *sine sensu* was also strongly gendered. Some miracles simply state that a person "was led" to a shrine, indicating nothing beyond the presence of an escort; others describe the application of physical force by the escorts. According to the miracles' authors, the behaviorally aberrant were at times "led by force," tied with ropes or chains, or hauled to shrines in a cart, in visual and physical demonstrations of their resistance and the community's response.[53] If we separate those who were *led* from those who were *led by force*, we find that only about two-fifths of those *led* were female, but four-fifths of those *led by force* were female (See Figure 17). This pattern of compulsory pilgrimage, then, was strongly associated with women. Women were more likely to be *sine sensu*; women *sine sensu* were more often perceived to be possessed; and when diagnosed as *sine sensu*, women were far more often compelled by the use of physical force to have their condition seen to by the saints than men were.

This link between compulsory pilgrimage and women also appears in Gui's *Sententiae.* Women were not in the majority among convicted heretics any more than they were among those seeking healing from the saints, but close scrutiny reveals that they were overrepresented among

[53] See for an example of the briefest formulation "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 825: "Ducta fuit ad sepulturam B. Simonis *per vim*…" (emphasis mine.)

those who were sentenced to pilgrimages. Overall, nearly two-fifths of Bernard Gui's sentences were handed down to women and three-fifths to men.[54] (See Figure 18). We see a relatively comparable gender balance among the 302 persons who were sentenced to or released from pilgrimages; of these, a little more than two-fifths (127) were women and slightly fewer than three-fifths (175) were men. But this gender parity in the gross numbers of heretic-pilgrims glosses over subtleties, as sentences of pilgrimage came in several varieties and were situated at the center of a larger scale of punishments used by the inquisitors. The worst offenders, recalcitrant and relapsed heretics, were released to secular authorities to be burned; this appeared infrequently.[55] Next to death, the worst punishment they inflicted was imprisonment, either for life or a fixed period of time.[56] The next mildest punishment was the command that the heretic wear a cross on her clothing, as an outward symbol of her spiritual failings. Crosses came in both single and double forms (double being reserved for those who did not cooperate with authorities or those more complicit in heresy) and came bundled with the requirement that their bearers wear them during a series of pilgrimages, which were more rigorous in the case of double crosses.[57] Crosses were a standard penance for 'believers' in various heresies who had been convicted for the first time; but they were also assigned to those who had been released from a term of imprisonment as "something akin to a parole system."[58] Crosses, in turn, could be lifted by the

[54] For the raw data, I rely throughout this chapter upon the work of Annette Pales-Gobillard in the extensive appendices to her edition of the *Liber Sententiae*: Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences de l'inquisiteur Bernard Gui, 1308–1323* (Paris, CNRS Editions, 2002), vol. II, 1645 ff. She counts 636 individuals as having appeared before the inquisitors. Statistical work on a portion of the *Sententiae* has also been done by Jacques Paul, "La mentalité d l'inquisiteur chez Bernard Gui," in *Bernard Gui et son monde*, ed. Marie-Humbert Vicaire, Cahiers de Fanjeaux, vol. 16 (Toulouse: E. Privat, 1981), 279–316. Given explored the entire book in his *Inquisition and Medieval Society.* (Given counts 637 individuals in the register.) In my sample for penitential pilgrims, I include those who appeared for relaxation of sentences, those who were sentenced to pilgrimages in their first brush with the inquisition, and those who received pilgrimages and crosses as a form of parole from a previous imprisonment; hence, my methodologies do not always yield the same figures as those provided by Given, who separated out relaxations from sentences.

[55] Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 71. He offers a basic statistical description of rates for each type of sentence.

[56] For more on imprisonment, see Mollat, introduction to Gui, *Manuel*, ed. Mollat, LIII–LVI; Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 69–71; Bernard Hamilton, *The Medieval Inquisition*, 52–54.

[57] Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 69.

[58] Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 84.

inquisitors if the penitent heretic fulfilled all pilgrimages and other obligations, leaving that person more or less rehabilitated into society. According to Given, "this extended supervision over convicted offenders was without parallel in medieval Europe."[59] Finally, a few heretics were told to complete a set of pilgrimages without wearing crosses; this was rare, occurring in only 17 cases in the *Sententiae*.

Sentencing decisions, as measured against this full scale of penances, tended to associate women with compulsory pilgrimages. In general, we can say that men were more heavily represented on the more serious end of the scale, and women on the lighter end. Men were more likely to be imprisoned than women on their first offense, and women more likely than men to be given crosses and their attendant pilgrimages (See Figure 18). Deviation from the aggregate gender division of roughly two-fifths women and three-fifths men is dramatic at the very top of the scale of punishments, where less than a quarter of those condemned to death are female.[60] Sentences of imprisonment nearly match the overall gender averages; but the balance begins to shift towards women on the next rung of the ladder, where slighly more than two-fifths of those who received any sort of pilgrimage sentence were women. The tendency to send women on pilgrimage becomes more clear upon a closer investigation of all 302 compulsory pilgrims who appeared in Gui's records. Among those pilgrims who sentenced to crosses and pilgrimages as a form of parole from imprisonment, less than two-fifths were women; comparatively, the gender balance among those who were immediately given crosses and sent on pilgrimage, non-parolee pilgrims, shows a significant (10%) increase in women and decrease in men. Women are also slightly more strongly represented than average among those who received lighter crosses. (See Figure 19.) Only 32% of women, as compared to 39% of men, were sentenced to double crosses, with their requirement of long-distance pilgrimages; meanwhile, only 40% of men, but 45% of women, received single crosses, which required easier, more localized pilgrimages. Finally, women outnumbered men outright among those who were sentenced pilgrimages without wearing any crosses at all, as well as those who appear for the first time in Gui's register to have crosses removed.

Why was there a general tendency for women to be sentenced to pilgrimages more often than men? In this case, I would posit that the

[59] Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 84.
[60] See table in Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. II, 1646.

medieval perception of women's inferior position in matters both social and spiritual limited their culpability for heresy, and was thus a cause for leniency. Céline Vilandrau noted that women seemed more often than men to have been put in contact with heresy through their families.[61] Le Roy Lauderie has described the power of heads of household in Montaillou, and the routine beating of wives by their husbands, over religious differences as well as other issues.[62] Women's disadvantage in agency in the home meant that many might be exposed to and pick up heresy because, as good subordinates should, they were following the directions of their male superiors. Furthermore, from the point of view of an educated cleric, women's physiology left them saddled with innate fickleness and curiosity; they were also, according to Jean Gerson, "softhearted and easily drawn into contemplation," which explained "the danger of the contemplative life's devolving into melancholia, phantasms, and mania."[63] While Gerson was concerned with false female mystics, his fears could as easily apply to heresy, especially considering the tendency to conflate heresy with madness and with demonic activity. Women, with their fickle natures, foolish minds, and resultant social subordination, might have appeared to be easy prey for heretical preachers appearing in their homes. This could hardly have been true in every case; the burning of the recalcitrant and mendacious Brune Hugou suggests that inquisitors did not think women entirely helpless or guiltless, and modern historians would agree that social agency was not totally outside of women's grasp.[64] However, it seems possible that inquisitors tried to distinguish between those women who were merely dutiful, and those who were willfully heretical. While heresy was a thing to be taken seriously, it was also a thing that required a conscious and fully independent choice. Contemporary assumptions about the inferiority of women's social influence, physiology, and intellect left more limited room for women to make such a choice.

The unusual cases of uncrossed compulsory pilgrimages would seem to underscore such an interpretation. Seventeen of the heretics appearing in the records were sentenced to pilgrimage *without* crosses, and of them, the simple majority were women. Although women were

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[61] Vilandrau, "Inquisition et 'sociabilité cathare'," 56.

[62] Le Roy Lauderie, *Montaillou*, 34–5, 192–4.

[63] Dyan Elliot, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 277–278.

[64] Le Roy Lauderie, *Montaillou*, 194–203.

proportionally overrepresented on the lighter end of the punishment scale, in no other category we have examined do female heretics flatly outnumber male ones. Most of these cross-free penitential pilgrims shared a single characteristic: they were people whose exposure to heresy was difficult, if not impossible, for them to avoid. Lombarde Hugou is an excellent case in point. As we know, she was sentenced to a pilgrimage in 1312, two years after her parents were put to death for their commitment to heresy. She was convicted of heresy because she met a Cathar heretic while living in their house.[65]

> She served him wine, and bread, and other necessities; she made his bed and washed his clothes. She heard heretical errors against the faith that he taught: that baptisms performed in the Church with water had no power, nor marriage, and that chaplains were not able to absolve people of their sins, that nobody could be saved except in the sect of these heretics…

Other women were sentenced to crossed pilgrimages, rather than uncrossed ones, for similar crimes, but in Lombarde's case there was a crucial circumstance to consider: at the time of this meeting, she was approximately eleven years old. At such a young age, she may have been either ignorant of or confused about the line between heresy and orthodoxy. But even if she understood these matters, she had no social power to refuse contact with the heretic. In her father's home, this sort of polite attention to guests was her place, and she was too young to be expected to challenge such conventions.[66]

Her lenient sentence suggests that the inquisitors understood the limits within which girls like Lombarde lived. But even though Lombarde was not entirely culpable for her support of heresy, she was still tainted by her contact with it. After all, her father, mother, and uncle were put to death for heresy, several other members of her family were convicted of the same crime, and her childhood home had been destroyed by order of the inquisitors.[67] Perhaps, in 1310, Lombarde herself was considered too young to undergo questioning or sentencing by the Inquisition;

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[65] Pales-Gobilliard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 591: "…servivit sibi de pane et vino et de aliis neccessariis et fecit sibi lectum et lavit sibi pannos et audivit ab eodem errores hereticorum contra fidem, quod baptismus ecclesie qui fit aqua nichil valebat nec matrimonium et quod capellani not poterant aliquem absolvere a peccatis et quod nullus poterat salvari nisi in fide ipsorum hereticorum…"

[66] Le Roy Lauderie, *Montaillou*, 52, also notes that 'dutiful daughters' followed their parents into heresy.

[67] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. II, 1675.

Hanawalt notes that "canon law…set twelve to fourteen as the age of entrance into legal liabilities."[68] However, when she reached sixteen, she, too, having come out of such a nest of vipers, had to be restored properly to the bosom of the Christian community.

Lombard's case was not unique. Three more of the nine women sentenced to an uncrossed pilgrimage were people just like her, whose exposure to heresy came during their childhood and whose convictions came some years later. Brulhes Capus was only thirteen when she listened to heretics preach in her parents' house, and was fifteen when she was convicted.[69] Maurande, the daughter of Hugh Maurand, was merely eleven when she met, listened to, and venerated heretical preachers who visited her parents' home. She was convicted of these crimes at seventeen.[70] Grazide, daughter to Raimond Bohla, was visiting a friend's home when she heard a heretic preach there. He later tried to come to visit her at her home, only to be chased off by her family. She was fourteen at the time, and was seventeen when she was sentenced.[71] These adolescent girls, relatively powerless in their fathers' households, were sentenced in accordance with their limited responsibility for their own social contacts. But by the time of their sentencing, they were also poised to assume adult positions within the community, most likely by entering into marriages. A penitential pilgrimage would not only rehabilitate their souls, it might perhaps dismiss lingering doubt about their families' reputations, perhaps making them safer marriage prospects. While the *Liber Sententiae* does not record judicial intent, it is tempting to suggest that this is what the inquisitors had in mind: having been made to walk the straight and narrow path, these girls could be given over to male caretakers who would then be responsible for preventing any further theological wandering on their part.

Those women sentenced to uncrossed pilgrimage whose contact with heresy came as adults had yet more limited interactions with danger. For example, Aladaycis, a widow, was visiting her daughter and her dying son-in-law when her daughter brought in two heretics to visit the man. Her daughter did not explain that these were heretics, but did

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[68] Barbara Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London: The Experience of Childhood in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 202.
[69] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 622–3.
[70] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 623–4.
[71] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 625–6.

tell Aladaycis that if anybody asked, she should say they were doctors. Aladaycis had her suspicions, but as she did not enter the sickroom while the heretics were present, she did not actually hear any heresy being preached.[72] Similarly, Lombarde, wife of Arnaud Lecger, had a female friend (at whose home Lombarde had once seen men she did not recognize) offer to bring heretics to her if she was ever sick and dying. Her reply was a robust refusal, one which underscored her husband's power over her: "by this she understood that {Sybille} wanted to speak about a heretic, and she said to Sybille that if her husband knew of this, he would strangle her, and she in no way wished to consent to this."[73] In these cases, the women were punished solely for their failure to report heretical activity. At the same time, these women recognized and avoided danger when they saw it, and perhaps this is why the inquisitors did not think them deserving of the public shame of crosses.

Compulsory pilgrimage, then, was a useful solution for a community when one of their members required correction for wayward behavior, but was only partially to blame for that behavior. Persons whose rationality or faith wandered were indeed dangerous, and hence required cautious oversight and correction, but that correction needed to be moderate when the wanderers' perceived weakness meant that they could not be held entirely accountable for having strayed. Women appeared in these semi-culpable situations at a rate disproportionate to their overall representation in Gui's *Sententiae* and in miracle collections.

Walking the Straight and Narrow Path

Compulsory pilgrimage was intended to correct problematic behavior. Considering that it was disproportionately applied to women, it represents a remarkable inversion of attitudes about women's voluntary pilgrimages, which were so often interpreted as opportunities to pursue ill-behavior, rather than to correct it. Since compulsory pilgrimages were understood as something quite different than a voluntary pilgrimage, the expectations and rituals of the pilgrimage itself were also different.

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[72] Pales-Gobillard, ed. *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 621–23.

[73] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 888: "…tunc ipsa intellexit quod hoc volebat dicere de heretico et dixit dicte Sibilie quod si maritus ipsius Lombarde sciret hoc suffocaret eam et noluit consentire in hoc."

The rituals of compulsory pilgrimage were intended to do two things: to make the pilgrims' status visible to others, and to make equally visible that this dangerous status was being both contained and corrected. These public performances justified the pilgrimage to observers through highly visible and audible displays of the pilgrims' crimes and their restoration.

The rituals of the compulsory pilgrimages imposed by inquisitors carefully differentiated heretics from other varieties of pilgrim. To begin with, we must recall that the vast majority of pilgrims sent forth by Bernard Gui were sentenced not to pilgrimages alone, but rather to a series of obligations represented by the wearing of crosses. These crosses were large and visible fabric badges that were to be worn on the exterior of a person's clothing:[74]

> We impose on you and enjoin you to wear two felt crosses of a yellow color, one in front on the chest, and the other in back between the shoulders, on all your clothing, without which prominently displayed you shall not go about either inside your home or outside of it; the length of one branch shall be two and a half palms, and the other, that is to say the transverse branch, two palms' length, and three fingers for the width of each branch. And you will repair or replace them if they tear off or if they wear off from age.

The badges were a most unwelcome stigma. Indeed, Sumption suggests that they were "regarded as the most humiliating part of the penance."[75] This was because, as Given has noted, they marked their bearers as members of a separate and decidedly inferior social group, "that of the penitent heretic or heretical sympathizer."[76] Those classified in this way by the inquisitors carried a number of social burdens. They were, as we know, assigned pilgrimages and yearly church-visits as a part of their penance. These travels were not only expensive and time-consuming, but also placed the shameful crosses in public view. Furthermore, during certain church holidays and processions at their

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[74] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 628: "Inponimus et injungimus duas cruces de filtro crocei coloris portandas unam anterius ante pectus et aliam posterius inter spatulas in omni veste vestra, sine quibus prominentibus infra domum vel extra nullatenus incedatis, quarum quantitas sit in longitudine duorum palmorum et dimidii brachium unum et duorum palmorum brachium aliud scilicet transversale, et trium digitorum in latitudine utrumque brachium et easdem refficiatis vel innovetis si rumpantur vel defficiant vetustate."

[75] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 110.

[76] Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 84.

home parishes, and possibly during visits to pilgrimages shrines, crossed penitents were publicly beaten or scourged.[77] Beyond these forms of ritualized sacrifice and shame, cross-bearers met with ostracism and harassment. Crosses made it difficult for their wearers to find work, good marriages for their children, and sometimes even shelter as they traveled to pilgrimage shrines.[78] The stigma associated with these outward signs of past heresy remained so deeply ingrained in European culture that as late as the sixteenth century, Carlo Ginzberg's infamous Friulian miller, Menocchio, found that the crosses assigned him by the Inquisition made it difficult for him to find employment.[79]

Cross-bearers carried their stigma over great distances. Unfortunately, Gui's *Book of Sentences* does not always make clear exactly which pilgrimages were expected of individual heretics. Instead, each *sermo generalis* simply noted the assignment of pilgrimages and then referred the penitents to their individual letters of penance, which contained the details of their sentences, and which do not survive to the present. So, while the long sermons on 25 May 1309, 23 April 1312, 7 March 1316, and 4–5 July 1322 sentenced a large number of people, they did not specify where they were to be sent on pilgrimage.[80] But the sermons show that inquisitors usually assigned one of two different categories of pilgrimage to the cross-bearers. The first was simply called 'major pilgrimages;' Gui's records do not specify which of these he intended, but in other inquisitorial records this meant pilgrimage to a large, important, and usually distant pilgrimage site such as Rome, Compostela, Cologne, Canterbury, or the Holy Lands.[81] Repentant heretics were also often assigned 'minor pilgrimages,' about which some of Gui's sermons offer more information. On 2 August 1321 the sermon indicated only that the cross-bearers were to undertake "all the minor pilgrimages," without listing what these might have been.[82] However, the sermons on

[77] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 110; Given, *Inquisition in Medieval Society*, 85.

[78] On the abuse of cross-wearers, see Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 110; Given, *Inquisition in Medieval Society*, 85; Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade, and Inquisition in Southern France*, 183; and Hamilton, *The Medieval Inquisition*, 52.

[79] Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (New York: Penguin Book, 1982), 97.

[80] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. I, 226, 1312, and 894; Vol. II, 1292.

[81] See G. Mollat, introduction to Bernard Gui, *Manuel de L'Inquisiteur*, ed. and trans. Mollat (Paris: Librarie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1926), LVI–LVII; See also Hamilton, *The Medieval Inquisition*, 51–2; and Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade, and Inquisition*, 183.

[82] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. II, 1321.

30 September 1319 and on 12 September 1322 contained a specific and daunting list of pilgrimages to shrines all over France, including places as far-flung as Bordeaux, Narbonnes, Puy, and Chartres.[83] Both major and minor pilgrimages, then, required ongoing public display of the hated crosses, and much time spent enduring the expense and discomforts of travel. Finally, Gui's register also records the imposition of yearly visitations to less distant churches, including destinations in Toulouse, Carcasonne, Albi, Pamiers, and Auch. Penitents were required not only to visit these churches on the assigned days, but to attend the entire Mass and sermon, which again placed them in view of the general public.[84] In light of these heavy penalties, the sentences of the small handful who were assigned pilgrimages without crosses—without, then, the beatings, humiliation, harassment, and ostracism—seem especially significant, particularly considering that the majority of them were women.

Women who were *sine sensu* and were compelled to go on pilgrimage were subject to a more immediate variety of compulsion. Where the heretic's waywardness could be curbed through humiliation, the irrational behaviors of demoniacs and the insane often called for physical restraint. Thus, at least the first half of the pilgrimages of the *sine sensu* and their escorts, and often their time at the shrine, was laden with dramatic potential, and invited public scrutiny. The escort which compelled the *sine sensu* to shrines might be made up of family, friends, or both; it might consist of a single caregiver or a crowd. Agnes of Montepulciano cured one demoniac who had been brought by her husband and family together.[85] Christina Coppir was brought to Vadstena twice by her husband and a group of his friends.[86] Margilia Hirundinis and the daughter of Elizabeth and Henry of Marienburgh each seem to have been brought by their mothers alone, even though both of them are described as having physically assaulted their mothers in the course of their journeys.[87] Thus, a portion of the person's home community participated in and witnessed the correction of the pilgrim in question.

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[83] Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences*, Vol. II, 1472.
[84] Mollat, introduction to Gui, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur*, LVI–LVII.
[85] "De S. Agnete," *Acta Sanctorum* April II, 811.
[86] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 120–1.
[87] The former case: "De s. Yvo," *Acta Sanctorum*, May IV, 573; the latter, Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau von 1394 bis 1521*, 45.

These entourages had to do more than accompany the *sine sensu* to her destination; they often had to cope with her violent or passive resistance to that travel. Again, in many cases we are told that the pilgrim was led *per vim*, 'by force,' to the shrine.[88] Some miracle stories provide a more specific description of the resistance offered by the insane or possessed pilgrim. We have already met the daughter of Elizabeth and Henry, who insulted and assaulted her mother during the course of the travel.[89] One of Agnes' demoniacs, to take another example, was persuaded to vow the pilgrimage, and was reasonably docile at first; but as she and her guides approached the location of the shrine, "the evil spirits, foreseeing their expulsion, began to attempt to impede it with monstrous acts, yelling in horrible voices that they were not able to advance a step further." In the end, "her companions led her into the church violently."[90] As a result of this sort of resistance, some of the *sine sensu* were bound during their journeys. This was the case with Margilia Hirundinis, aged twenty-one, who was so violent that "it was necessary that she be held and tied."[91] St. Yves cured her; he also cured another unnamed woman brought to the shrine "tied because of her madness."[92] It is possible that similar methods were used in other cases where the relationship between demoniac and guide was described only using the simple formula 'brought to the shrine by force.' Furthermore, in three cases the entourages did not even bother to make their charges walk the path to the shrine, but instead hauled women along in carts, overcoming any resistance to walking by rendering it unnecessary.[93]

An element of practicality may well have informed these uses of force by the companions of the *sine sensu*. But there is also an element

[88] This shorthand was favored by the authors of Simone's miracles. See "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 825, 827.

[89] Stachnik, ed., *Die Akten des Kanonisationprozesses Dortheas von Montau von 1394 bis 1521*, 45.

[90] "De S. Agnete," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 811: "…praevidentes maligni spiritus suam expulsionem, ab incepto impedire conati sunt monstruosis actibus; execrabili voce clamantes, quod ulterius progredi non poterant. Quamobrem ampluis comitantes consanguinei confortati, violenter intra eccleesiam conduxerunt…"

[91] "De s. Yvo," *Acta Sanctorum*, May IV, 572–3: "…sic quod oportebat eam teneri & ligari…"

[92] "De s. Yvo," *Acta Sanctorum*, May IV, 573: "…& ligatam propter ejus furiam…"

[93] See "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 825, 827, for two such cases; and Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 121, for the third.

of public display in this use of force, or at least in the recording of details about that use of force. The violent exchanges between a female demoniac and her family announced to both the communities along the pilgrimage route and the communities who later heard the stories that there was a distinct reason for the women's journeys: they were ill, useless and dangerous, and the situation required supernatural intervention if the women were to reassume their places in their communities. Just as the chains of a released prisoner or the crutches of a paralytic might be left at shrines in gratitude, the rope or chain binding a demoniac—whether seen on the road or described by a text—was a visible badge displaying the severity of her illness. Like the crosses worn by penitent heretics, these badges were shameful and were associated with the need for physical chastisement of the pilgrim herself. Carts had a particularly powerful implication as elements of public display. Not only were they a sign of the woman's resistance or incapacity where it came to walking, but they also implied a state of public notoriety and shame. Criminals were routinely paraded about medieval cities and villages as a part of their punishment for having crossed a social boundary, sometimes on carts or parade floats, sometimes mounted backwards on an ass.[94] Indeed, there was such infamy associated with carts that Chrétien de Troyes' twelfth-century Arthurian romance *The Knight of the Cart* hinges upon Lancelot's brief hesitation to ride in one, even though it was the only way he could come to his lover Guinevere's rescue. Chrétien himself explained the association between carts and disgrace:[95]

> In those days carts were used as pillories are now… that cart was for all criminals alike, for all traitors and murderers, for all those who lost trials

[94] Barbara Hanawalt, "Rituals of Inclusion and Exclusion," in *Of Good and Ill Repute: Gender and Social Control in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 18–34; see also Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule," in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), 97–123.

[95] Chrétien de Troyes, "The Knight of the Cart," in *Arthurian Romances*, trans. William W. Kibler and Carleton W. Carroll (New York, Penguin Books, 1991), 211; see also Chrétien de Troyes, "Le chevalier de la charette," in *Les romans de Chrétien de Troyes edités d'apres la copie de Guiot (Bibl. Nat. fr. 794)*, ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1967), 11: "De ce servoit charrete lores / don li pilori servent ores, / et en chascune boene vile / ou or en a plus de trois mile, / n'en avoit a cel tans que une, / et cele estoit a ces comune, / ausi con li pilori sont, / qui traïson ou murtre font, / et a ces qui sont chanp cheü, / et as larrons qui ont eü / autrui avoir par larracin / ou tolu par force an chemin: / qui a forfet astoit repris / s'estoit sor la charette mis / et menez par totes les rues…"

> by combat, for those who had stolen another's possessions by larceny or snatched them by force on the highways. The guilty person was taken and made to mount in the cart and was led through every street…

Chrétien's fictional cart has been interpreted by David Shirt as a version of real judicial and social punishments, such as gallows-carts which carried prisoners to and served as platforms for hangings, and the tumbrel, or mobile ducking-stool, used for public humiliation of minor criminals.[96] All of these conveyances literally lifted their bound occupants up to be exposed to punishment and public shame; the cart in which a bound demoniac had been placed would also have served as a stage upon which to present its occupant to the disapproval of passersby.

The binding and carting of the *sine sensu* and the crossing of convicted heretics, then, served the same purpose as the proudly-displayed badges and cockle-shells of happier pilgrims: they signaled to others on the road, and readers after the fact, the nature of the travelers' errand. But in this case, rather than inviting passersby to pity and perhaps aid the pilgrim, they helped the compulsory pilgrimage to do its job as a form of behavioral correction by subjecting the pilgrim to public disapproval and even corrective blows. As such, while those who chose pilgrimage proudly displayed symbols of their improved spiritual status on the way home from a shrine, for those compelled to go on pilgrimage, the routine was just the opposite: public markers of their shameful status were stripped away during their journeys. These symbols—crosses, bonds, and carts—were removed in public, just as they had originally been imposed. These visible changes to the appearance of the pilgrim denoted both the rehabilitative power of pilgrimage, and the restoration of the compulsory pilgrim to a more normal social status. The public attention that formed such a crucial foundation of arguments against the voluntary pilgrimages of women became, in the case of compulsory pilgrimages, a positively necessary component in framing the pilgrimage, and eventually the pilgrim, as socially and spiritually righteous.

Convicted heretics, as we have seen, were sent to many shrines, over large distances, under adverse social circumstances, there to be publicly

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[96] David J. Shirt, "Chrétien de Troyes and the Cart," in W. Rothwell, W. R. J. Barron, David Blamires, and Lewis Thorpw, eds., *Studies in Medieval Literature and Languages in Memory of Frederick Whitehead* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973), 279–301.

displayed and physically chastised. But this was not necessarily a lifelong predicament. People could eventually be released from the wearing of crosses, too. The restoration of crossbearers to normal status occurred during the course of a *sermo generalis*, the large public ceremony during which penitent heretics abjured their heresy, and their crimes and sentences were read aloud. Perhaps because it was happy news, and perhaps because it represented a positive example for the penitent heretics shortly to be sentenced, the names of those who had earned grace from crosses (as well as those released from imprisonment) were announced early in the sermon.[97] After taking an oath to correct their belief, those receiving this grace were allowed to remove the crosses in public at their parish churches during the Mass, after the reading of the Gospel, on a feast day.[98] The occasions of the *sermo generalis* followed by the public removal of the crosses displayed for the community the decision of authority figures that the penitent should be reinstated, and the actual achievement of that reinstatement, respectively. Slightly over half of all pilgrim-penitents who appear in the *Liber Sententiae* were granted this leniency. Of these, 70 were men and 65 were women; comparatively speaking, women are overrepresented, as just over half of female pilgrims but only two-fifths of male pilgrims received this grace. While no further information is available about the behavior of individual penitents, this disparity may be the result of the tendency to sentence women to crosses and pilgrimages rather than to prison on their first offense, thus ensuring that women would be more likely to live long enough to meet the requirements of their sentences. It might also suggest that women were more likely than men to comply with their sentences, since lifting of crosses depended upon complete fulfillment of one's pilgrimage and visitation obligations, as well as cooperation in future prosecution of other heretics.[99]

Upon reaching their pilgrimage destination, the *sine sensu* also entered into a series of rituals designed to demonstrate the restoration of their spiritual status. These rituals were formal and were staged for public viewing, much like those which restored heretics. The moment of

[97] Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 73–5, provides an excellent summary of the organization of a *sermo generalis*.

[98] Mollat, introduction to Gui, *Manuel*, ed. Mollat, LXV.

[99] Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 84–85. While the difficulty of achieving clemency led Given to assert that "those convicted of heresy almost never completed their terms of penance," the 135 cases where Gui did indeed provide grace from crosses suggest that such a negative view is something of an exaggeration.

restoration came, like the moment of a heretic's restoration, in public view in a sacred location. For example, we can easily imagine the dramatic power for onlookers as Prixiata Jacobs, having been dragged to the shrine of Simone da Todi by force, was freed of her demons while "standing atop the tomb of the said saint."[100] The dramatics of the tableau are particularly notable in that they were related by the normally curt author of Simone's miracle collection. It must have been similarly arresting when Simone cured Mixina, daughter of Relonis, after an overnight vigil from Saturday to Sunday. As her possession inspired attention-grabbing behavior from Mixina, who was "crying out and doing other things that the possessed do, such that no one was in any way able to hold her," it must have been a noisy night indeed for anyone at the shrine, and her return to sanity must also have drawn the attention of others in attendance. Sandra the daughter of Franchi was the object of a similarly dramatic vigil at Simone's shrine.[101] Margilia daughter of Guillielmi, who was both violent and physically bound, was cured in like fashion "next to the grave of the said Yves."[102]

After a woman who had been *sine sensu* was functional once more, it was important that the she prove her recovery through a display of her renewed respect for Christian ritual and her gratitude to the saint. Simone's miracles let us know that Maria the daughter of Michael, once restored, "made a great curtsey at the said grave and claimed {Simone} as Blessed."[103] Similarly, Mixina, once freed, "presented herself at the arc of the Blessed Simone."[104] Sandra, after her cure, "bent her knees before the arc of the Blessed Simone, and placing herself before the crucifix, God, and the glorious Virgin Mary, she devotedly and sweetly acclaimed the Blessed Simone and all the saints of God." She also stayed long enough to hear Mass, and we are assured that she was physically able to see the Eucharist.[105] In one exception, the case

[100] "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 825: "…& ipsa existente super arcam d. Sancti est liberata…"

[101] Both cases appear in "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 827: "…exclamando & alia faciendo ut faciunt adversatae, ita quod aliquis nullo modo eam poterat tenere."

[102] "De s. Yvo," *Acta Sanctorum*, May IV, 572–3: "…juxta sepulcrum D. Yvonis…"

[103] "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 825: "…faciendo magnam reverentiam ad d. sepulturam & ipsum Beatum collaudando…"

[104] "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 827: "…hodie se praesentavit ad arcam d. B. Simonis, sanam et a d. infirmitate liberatam…"

[105] "De B. Simone," *Acta Sanctorum*, April II, 827: "…& postmodum flexis genibus ante arcam B. Simonis & coram Crucifixo se ponendo, Deum & gloriosam Virignem

of Margiulia, it was her mother who brought a wax candle in offering just after her cure.[106]

When authors choose to describe it, the pilgrim's experience and performance on the road home from the shrine is purposefully contrasted with her experience on the road to the shrine. None of the formerly *sine sensu* are described as being hauled back in their carts, and they no longer require bonds; once the condition was cured, these symbols fell away. Simone's authors assure us that the women remained sane and functional after their cures. This assurance of health might also be made at some later date; two years after Bridget of Sweden had cured a case of possession in a two-year-old girl whose demons caused her to engage in bodily contortion, the author of the story noted "I saw the girl led into my presence in good health of body and senses."[107] One story, however, emphasizes that a woman's happy, whole state, as it was demonstrated along her pilgrimage route home, stuck in the mind of an observer. The story of one of Yves' cures of a madwoman was reported not by the woman or her relatives, but a bystander along the pilgrimage route, who recalled the woman's progress to the shrine in bonds and her healthy, bondless return a few days later.[108]

Compulsory pilgrimages, then, demonstrated both problem and solution. Women who were the objects of such pilgrimages were visibly marked with symbols of their shame and spiritual sickness such as crosses, bonds, and carts. Compulsory pilgrimage rituals on the road and at shrines also incorporated the use of force; the *sine sensu* were dragged 'per vim' and penitent heretics were scourged at their destinations. But these same compulsory pilgrimages served to heal the very breach that they symbolized, by displaying not only the woman's damaged state, but also her healing and restoration. Ropes and chains became unnecessary because of these pilgrimages, and through them heretic women proved enough good faith that their crosses could be removed. Women who completed compulsory pilgrimages returned home cured, (hopefully) never to wander again.

Mariam & B. Simonem & omnes Sanctos & Sanctas Dei collaudando devote & benigne…"

[106] "De s. Yvo," *Acta Sanctorum*, May IV, 573.

[107] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 177: "Iam duobus annis euolutis, postquam hec contigerant, puellam vidi ad presenciam meam adductam bene sanam corpore et sensibus…"

[108] "De s. Yvo," *Acta Sanctorum*, May IV, 573.

Community Collaboration and the Agency of Compulsory Pilgrims

On the 25th of March, 1376, a young woman named Christina Coppir was freed of demonic possession for a second time at the monastery founded at Vadstena by St. Birgitta of Sweden. That day, according to the miracle story which later appeared in Birgitta's canonization dossier, Christina reported that her demon had left her for good.[109] The story of Christina's restoration is unusually detailed, but it is not otherwise dissimilar from other miracles of exorcism that appear in later medieval collections. It states that Christina had been vexed by demons since her early childhood, and that when she was little her parents had engaged a local female healer (or 'sorceress,' in the author's words) who attempted and failed to expel the demon more than once. Christina's childhood was filled with terrifying apparitions, and her parents were also attacked by the devil.[110]

Shortly after Christina's marriage in November of 1375, her symptoms intensified. She was struck with blindness and paralysis, and eventually became violent. Hoping to heal her, Christina's husband and some of his friends brought her from their home in Bro (on the island of Gotland) to the shrine of St. Birgitta at Vadstena in January of 1376. During the ten-day journey, the devil harassed Christina and her companions, giving them peace only while they took shelter at the cathedral in Lincopen. Once they arrived at Vadstena, the community of Birgettine nuns and their clerical associates performed a dramatic three-day exorcism. The nuns sang hymns and touched Christina with the relics of St. Birgitta, and a priest said Mass and later encouraged Christina to kiss his hand. The devil fought these efforts, throwing Christina about and exhorting her to leave the church, but eventually the exorcism was successful in temporarily restoring Christina to health. Upon her return home, however, she relapsed, and her husband brought her back for a second exorcism and cure in late March.[111]

A story about the pilgrimage of a demoniac is extremely likely, as we have seen, to be the story of a pilgrimage forced upon a woman by a man. An infestation of demons was something that females acted out and suffered, and males responded to and cured.[112] But Christina's

[109] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 123.
[110] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 120.
[111] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 120–123.
[112] On the gendered nature of possession, see, among other works, Dyan Elliot,

highly detailed story demonstrates that compulsory pilgrimages need not be regarded as a simple inversion of the dynamic which is assumed in satire, wherein women wished to travel and men wished to prevent them from doing so. To accept such an inversion at face value is tempting, and it might certainly reflect the worldview of some medieval authors; for them, the behavior of the demoniac and the response, diagnostic and therapeutic, of the people around her was a struggle for power between two adversarial parties.[113] But a closer examination of the story of Christina's cure makes clear that the power relationships of compulsory pilgrimage were neither so rigid nor so hierarchical as we might expect. Indeed, that which was played out as coercion might be better understood as a form of collaboration among all parties involved, including the coerced. This particular collaboration served several different social needs, benefiting the nuns and the Christian community as much as Christina and her husband.

Several scholars of the history of possession and exorcism have noted that it is worthwhile to consider the agency of demoniacs; in particular, analyses of demonic possession in early modern Europe have pointed out that possession was a role that could be played by young women as a form of social rebellion.[114] Aviad Klienberg and Nancy Caciola have discussed a similar process of self-fashioning in the role of living saint or the 'divinely possessed.'[115] At the same time, a possession is in part produced by the society in which it occurs, and by the consensus

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Proving Woman, and *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and the Demonic in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Caciola, *Discernment of Spirits*; Rosalyn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writings of Late-Medieval Women Visionaries* (Suffolk, UK: York Medieval Press, 1999); and Newman, "Possessed by the Spirit."

[113] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 227.

[114] An excellent synopsis of these opinions is provided by Philip C. Almond in the introduction to *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 22–26. He notes on p. 26 that "Possession by the Devil then was a culturally available means by which children and adolescents, and especially young women, escaped their subordination. They expressed their powerlessness in the only way available to them—through their bodies. In so doing they were empowered. Possession by spirits enabled them to break through the culturally imposed limits on their speech and behaviour. The worst excesses of their rebelliousness could be excused and laid at the Devil's door."

[115] See Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, and Aviad Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

construction of the meaning of the demoniac's behavior. Caciola provides an invaluable framework that draws these elements together in what she calls a "performative view of spirit possession," which

> …sees the phenomenon as a particular cultural process of identity-formation that subsists on three interdependent factors. They are: one, the cultural construction of particular identity "roles"; two, the self-representations of the individual as she "performs" such roles; and three, the collective evaluation of the individual's actions by observers, or the "audience."[116]

Taking this performative model as a critical starting point, I would like to explore Christina's case in more detail in order to assert two things about her pilgrimage. First, in an extension of Caciola's second factor, the self-representation of Christina's performance showed remarkable agency, and also suggests an acknowledgment of that agency by the people around her. Rather than seeing in Christina an inversion of Alison of Bath, forced to travel where she did not wish to go, it is possible to describe Christina as having forcefully motivated the events of her religious travel, and the people around her as following her lead. Secondly, in response to Caciola's third factor, I would argue that just as miracle stories are a collaborative narrative, so too the series of events surrounding Christina's compulsory pilgrimage was a collaborative performance. From the moment that a pilgrimage was initiated, all those who participated in its rituals and progress played identity roles. Christina's husband, his friends, and the nuns of Vadstena did not merely evaluate and observe; they also helped the demoniac to play her role. As such, the performance of a possession through a compulsory pilgrimage was not the performance of a demoniac alone, but rather of an entire community or series of communities, each of which found it useful to participate in this particular identity-formation process for their own reasons.

Let us examine Christina and her performance in greater detail. The story of her pilgrimage begins shortly after her marriage on November 11, 1375, when the symptoms of her possession became severe:[117]

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[116] Caciola, "Mystics, Demoniacs, and the Physiology of Spirit Possession in Medieval Europe," 288.

[117] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 120–121: "Post hec autem tercia die venit ad eam diabolus vehementer jratus et percussit eam ita valenter, quod cecidit in terram et connexit ambo genua sua, que ita inseparabiliter coherebant, ac si

> However, after three days the Devil came to her, vehemently angry, and hit her so hard that she fell to the ground and both her knees were connected, so that they were inseparably stuck together as if fixed by an iron nail, and in no way were they able to be separated. She fell thus, like a useless log, not well enough to move a hand or a foot or any part of herself, except her tongue in order to speak; although she spoke so quietly that it was difficult to understand what she said. She could not smell any odors except the worst ones.

While speculations about her interior world are completely unverifiable, it is seductive to speculate that Christina, who had a long history of troubled behavior, was expressing opposition to her husband and her marriage. This must, however, remain speculative; I am not interested in attempting a modern psychological diagnosis, or proposing a single concrete explication of Christina's subjective experience. I would like instead to draw attention to the functional aspects of her symptoms. This 'strike' by the Devil, however we choose to interpret its origins, engendered behaviors that represented a powerful barrier to Christina's new social role. She could not part her legs, a frank acknowledgment of her inaccessibility as a sexual partner. Given that the penitential tradition urged couples to delay consummation of marriages for one to three days after their marriage, it is not impossible that the marriage was entirely unconsummated, or that it had only been consummated in one encounter before the possession intervened.[118] Furthermore, with her body immobilized, Christina could not perform the day-to-day household work of a wife; even her ability to speak, and thus to explain or discuss her experiences, was compromised.

Although it is possible to interpret the performance of these incapacities as an act of resistance on Christina's part, that resistance was nonetheless performed in a completely passive fashion, and was described as such by the miracle's narrator. To begin with, it was not initiated at her marriage, but in her childhood. The miracle relates that Christina was "from the first year of her infancy struck in her sleep by the devil with a great infestation of demons; but when she wanted to tell her parents

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clauo ferreo confixa forent nemine ea abinuicem separare valente. Jacuit itaque quasi truncus jnutilis non valens mouere manum nec pedem neque aliud membrum, sed neque linguam ad expedite loquendum, submisse tamen loquebatur difficulter aliquo intelligente, quid diceret. Odorem non sensit nisi pessimum.

[118] James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 159.

this, she was not able to open her mouth."[119] This passage starts with a portrayal of Christina as helpless victim, too young to be morally conscious and unable even to relate the problem to her caregivers. After her marriage, Christina's possession was again expressed not through the things she was doing, but rather those she was *not*: moving, speaking, properly sensing the world, and so on. Linguistically, the narrator frames her as a passive victim of this possession; he explains that she *had been struck* by an outside force, and as a result of the blow she *had fallen*, helpless and useless. Thus, Christina, as demoniac, lacked agency in that she was not perceived as fully culpable for her behavior—but she was simultaneously a very powerful agent in that her behavior constituted an absolute refusal to undertake her basic functions within her newly-formed household.[120]

Christina's passive resistance transformed into active resistance about two weeks later.[121]

> After about the feast of St. Katherine (Nov. 25) she lost the vision in her eyes, such that she could see nothing at all except the Devil and a small circle around him, and she saw everything that was with the Devil in this circle. He now vexed her so bitterly that she flung herself about and collided with the walls, where she fell or sat and pulled her hair and tore at her own limbs, so that all who saw her marveled that a living person could suffer so much pain in an hour.

While Christina's blindness appears to be another passive affliction, we must recall that only by her own active report could it be determined by those around her that what visual acuity was left to her focused solely on the Devil. Furthermore, she now began to engage in frightening physical agitation and self-harm; the author explained that exterior harassment caused her to take these actions ('fling herself about'), a presentation which blurs the distinction between the devil's agency and Christina's own. This peculiar dichotomy continues throughout the

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[119] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 120: "…que a primus annis infancie magnas infestacionis in sompnis perpessa est a diabolo…"

[120] Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England*, 22–26.

[121] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 121: "Postea circa festum Katherine visu oculorum priuata est, ita quod nichil omnino viderat nisi diabolum et circa eum vnum circulum et omne, quod erat cum eo in illo circulo, hoc videbat. Hic eam tam acriter vexebat, commouebat et collidebat ad parietes, vbi jacuit uel sedebat, ac traxit per crines membratimque discerpsit, vt omnes videntes eam mirarentur, quomodo in vna hora tantas penas viuens pati possent."

narrative. While the author presented Christina as a passive victim of demonic assaults, the events of her possession as they unfold from this point forward nonetheless depend entirely upon Christina as an actor and as an interpreter of her actions and experiences. Christina was, of necessity, the major architect in the construction of this possession.

Perhaps the worsening severity of Christina's symptoms helped to convince her husband that her condition represented something more serious than a tantrum on the part of a reluctant bride. Perhaps, on the other hand, it was the duration of the symptoms which was persuasive, for it was not until six weeks later, on January 12, 1376, that "her husband along with his friends prepared her that she might be taken to Vadstena."[122] Whatever the case, the timetable of events does not suggest that her husband immediately assessed Christina's performance as that of a hopeless demoniac. Instead, during the two months between November 14 and January 12 Christina apparently did not take up the role of wife, and her husband did not manage to persuade or compel her to behave differently. There is a faint hint of standoff in the air here, although we know nothing specific about the relationship between husband and wife during those weeks. All we can know is that eventually, Christina's behaviors were indeed interpreted by her husband as something that required saintly intercession and a significant, time-consuming ritual, even if he did not feel at first that this was the case.

So, her husband took Christina on pilgrimage; he acted, and she was compelled. While the author does not note in detail the nature of the preparations for their journey, we do know that she was loaded up in a cart.[123] Christina's husband, then, made a point of using at least one of the trappings of his dominance, and her shame, that sometimes attended the compulsory pilgrimages of demoniacs. Furthermore, the miracle story provides detailed descriptions of the party's physical restraint of Christina, and of the display of this manhandling before large audiences. Their visit to the cathedral at Lincopin was accomplished by dint of "dragging her along."[124] When they finally reached the shrine, the entire community at Vadstena had the opportunity to

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[122] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 121: "…maritus suus cum amicis suis parauit se, vt transferret eam Wastenas…"

[123] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 121.

[124] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 121: "invasitque redeuntem ab ecclesia satis nequiter pertractando."

see Christina's passivity and helplessness, and the active physical power of her male companions and of the Devil:[125]

> When they then came to Vadstena, she lay in the cart in which they had taken her, and a crowd of many of the inhabitants of that place came to see, and in the sight of all these bystanders the devil seized her by the feet, lifting her on high, and made her to fall horribly from the cart. After this her husband and other strong men carried her to the chapel, and she felt more heavy than usual.

In this public moment, she, her husband, and the Devil played out the roles of helpless female demoniac and assertive male intercessors from a traditional script.

But the Devil, as they say, is in the details, and the details of this story serve as an ongoing counterpoint to the performance of male control and female passivity. Close scrutiny of the Devil's presence in the story uncovers a very different Christina, one with the agency to construct and enact the Devil's role. The Devil, after all, could only be represented by Christina's body, actions and reporting. As Caciola noted of female mystics, "the surface of the body is a site of particular significance, for it represents the locus of mediation between the internal-individual and the external-communal . . . the discernment of spirits was always really a discernment of bodies. There simply was no way to prove that the visions and revelations to which many of these women lay claim had even occurred . . ."[126] In Christina's case, we must extend this axiom to include not only the state of her body and her physical motion, but also her acts of speech, which relayed and interpreted the speech of the Devil.

As the party traveled towards Vadstena, Christina's unique visual acuity, an experience we can only know about through her own reporting of it, positioned her as the interpreter of the Devil's actions:[127]

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[125] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 121: "Cum iam venisset Wastenas, jacuit in vehiculo, quo illuc translate est, confluentibus multis de habitatoribus loci et alijs ad videndum, et in conspectu omnium astancium arripuit eam diabolus per pedes eleuans in sublime et fecit horribiliter cadere in vehiculum. Post hec maritus suus cum alio viro forti portauerunt eam ad capellam, et solito poderosior effecta est."

[126] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 86.

[127] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 121: ". . . cucurrit cum eis diabolus in habitu hovalium modernorum et cadens in quadam lubrica glacie flere cepit, quod videns illa dixit sequentibus se, quod fleret, ac illi ridere ceperunt. Ille vero surgens arripuit vnum per pedes et collidebat eum ad glaciem, alterum vero percussit in dentes cum instrumento, quo minabat jumenta, ita quod sanguis effluerent, et dolentibus illis

> …the Devil went along with them in the guise of a modern courtier, and falling on a certain slippery patch of ice he began to cry; but she, seeing him, told them he was following and that he was crying, and they began to laugh at him. But he, rising up, snatched one of them off his feet and threw him to the ice, and another he hit in the teeth with a weapon with which they hit the beast of burden, such that the blood flowed, and of this pain he said; "For a time you laughed, but now I laugh." And wherever they brought the woman, whether in church or anywhere else, always the devil followed her and afflicted her…

The nature of this manifestation of the Devil is cloudy. Either Christina identified a figure on the road as the Devil, a person whom everybody could see but at whom only Christina happened to be looking when he fell, or Christina was the only one who could see the Devil's physical manifestation as a courtier. Either way, it was Christina who relayed the pivotal information to her companions; and they are portrayed as having acted upon her interpretation of this either perfectly normal or wholly invisible courtier without any hesitation.

That Christina should have had exclusive perception of the Devil's appearance and speech seems part and parcel of her inability to use her senses in the normal fashion. We know that she had visual perception only of the Devil, and that, from an early point in her possession, she was unable to smell anything except foul odors.[128] This limited sensory perception squares neatly with the understanding of spirit possession framed by theologians in the later Middle Ages, who asserted that the indwelling demon physically interfered with the senses, creating delusions.[129] The importance of Christina's abnormal sensory experience is underscored by the resolution of the tale; only when the possession was lifted were proper speech, sight, and scent restored to her.[130] It seems reasonable, then, to understand the inverse, that her state of possession granted her the sole ability to see the normally invisible Devil. However, the belief of all involved in the real presence of the Devil, regardless of their ability to perceive him, blurs any systematic understanding of the Devil's interactions with people. Thus, while his exterior visual appear-

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dixit: 'Pro tempore vos risistis, jam ego rideo.' Et quocumque portaretur mulier siue in ecclesia siue alicubi, semper sequebatur eam diabolus affligendo…

[128] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 120.

[129] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 193–197.

[130] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 122: "Sequenti vero die…sensit naturalem thuris odorem, et…receipt visum clare videns hostiam in manibus sacerdotis."

ance was only ever described in that early moment when Christina noticed him slip and fall, much of the narrative presented the Devil as if he were a perfectly mundane physical presence.

This vagueness about the nature of Devil's appearance and communications, for example, pervades the events that followed Christina's arrival in the chapel at Vadstena: "However, after they had placed her in a certain place in the chapel, the Devil seized her feet and wanted to drag her out, gnashing his teeth so horribly that the hearts of her onlookers nearly burst from fear. Her husband, however, dragged her to himself, holding her by the head, but was not able to keep hold of her without the aid of the men who had helped before."[131] It is apparent that there was a struggle, but the text leaves the reader uncertain how that struggle appeared to onlookers. We do not know whether the Devil had been seen by people other than Christina—the passage states only that he had been *heard*, and this auditory manifestation is striking in its singularity. At no other point did the narrative describe the Devil's physical attributes or communications unless they were relayed through Christina's perceptions. There is room here to imagine a very powerful, active Devil and a passive, helpless Christina; but the author does not hide that these manifestations were, for the most part, described and enacted by Christina alone. She, then, was in fact and in the understanding of her community the Devil's interpreter and agent.

After the party arrived at Vadstena, while the Devil spoke a great deal, he was always presented as speaking directly to Christina; never again do bystanders quake in their boots to hear him, no matter how heated his verbalizations become. There is much of this speech, and all of it is addressed directly to Christina:[132]

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[131] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 121–122: "Postquam autem collocassent eam in quodam loco in capella, arripuit eam diabolus per pedes volens extrahere eam, frendens tam horribiliter, quod fere rumpebatur cor videncium eam pre timore. Maritus autem eius attraxit sibi tenens eam per capud, sed retinere non valuit, antequam juuit eum vir qui prius."

[132] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 122: "Quadam autem die positum est capud domine Brigide super capud eius et ligata est super eius pectus crux argentea paruula, quam domina Brigida posuerat in sepulcro Dominj in Jerusalem, et osculabatur manum cuiusdam senis presbiteri. Quo facto venit ad eam totus furibundus diabolus dicens: 'Iam multa tecum faciunt, ecce posuerunt clauam, que est michi pessima, super caput tuum, uel quare osculabaris manum illius pessimi senis presbiteri fetentem,' extendensque manum suam dixit: 'Osculare manum meam,' quod illa negante cepit blandis verbis quasi amicam rogare eam, quod a se abiceret stipulam illam, quam gerebat supra se, scilicet in pectore, dicens se pre uehemencia fetoris pessimj, quem redderet sibi, non posse ibi commorari."

> However, the next day the head of the lady Bridget was placed on her head, and a small silver cross that the blessed Bridget had placed on the sepulcher of our Lord in Jerusalem, was tied on her chest, and she kissed the hand of a certain elderly priest. With this done, the devil came *to her* in a total rage, saying , 'now they do many things to you; behold, they placed a key, which is the worst to me, over your head, whereby you kissed the hand of that worst, stinking old priest,' and extending his hand he said *to her*, 'Kiss my hand!!' When she refused, he began *to ask her* with charming words like those of a friend, if she would throw away that stick that she wore on herself, that is to say, on her chest, saying vehemently that because of the most terrible stink which it gave to her, he would not be able to abide there. (Emphases mine.)

We have no indication as to whether the author thought that bystanders could hear this conversation. All told, it would appear as if almost all communications from the Devil, up to and including his appearance as a courtier on the road, were interpreted by Christina for persons who did not share her specialized sensory state (that is to say, for everybody else around her).

This pattern in communications is made all the more intriguing when it is compared to the sensory perceptions that bystanders *did* mention. Aside from the tooth-grinding, the miracle story did not record that bystanders saw apparitions or heard voices. Instead, the bystanders' experiences of Christina's possession centered on Christina's verbal reports, on her body and behavior (including, as we have seen, her physical violence or passivity), and on the presence of something moving inside her. After her husband and his friends bodily hauled Christina into chapel at Vadstena, the congregation of nuns and clerics sang hymns in order to exorcise Christina's demon:[133]

> …he vexed her and threw her into the walls near which she sat, so horribly that nearly the entire chapel trembled and moved, and many of those seeing it were moved to tears, and the women who touched her testified that they felt some body moving in her innards, as if perhaps she was near to giving birth. Whence the Devil spoke to her, and said to her, "I do not cause great harm to you, but he who lives in you is much more troublesome, afflicting you more heavily."

[133] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 122: "…vexabat eam et collidebat eam ad parietem circa quem sedebat jta horribiliter, quod fere tremebat et mouebatur tota capella, et in fletum excitarentur plurimj hoc videntes, et testificate sunt mulieres eam tangentes se sentire aliquid corporeum ita moueri in visceribus eius, ac si foret vicina partui. Vnde et dixit ad eam diabolus, qui loquebatur secum: 'non ego facio tibi multa mala, sed ille, qui habitat in te, est tibi multo molestior te grauius affligendo.'

Here, the surface of the body literally mediated the possession for those playing the role of Christina's spiritual helpers. Christina's violent motion displayed demonic attack, and the presence of a demon was confirmed by touching Christina's belly. The quasi-pregnancy the nuns detected reflects the belief that indwelling demons inhabited the 'open spaces' of the body, including the bowels and womb. Cases of possession-pregnancy sometimes even ended with the demon expelled though the 'shameful parts,' as if birthed.[134] Meanwhile, the Devil, mediated by Christina, verbally interpreted this indwelling demon as a much more serious problem than his exterior attacks, a view closely aligned with the theology of spirit possession. Even mystics and saints were assaulted by demons, but demoniacs succumbed to these attacks and allowed the demon entrance into their body.[135]

Thus, Christina's passive resistance and forced journey may have masked great agency. It was her perceptions that determined that she was possessed, and her ongoing behavior helped to make clear that a pilgrimage was necessary. Throughout, Christina herself was the agent who enacted the devil's role in the drama. Ultimately, it must also have been Christina who relayed the news to those standing by that her possession was over.[136]

> However, on Thursday, while we were coming in to sing, he ceased in his vexations and receding from the chapel yelled, "Go, go, for nothing bad is able to happen to you." But although he had dismissed her, she nevertheless lay paralyzed like a completely dead person.

Even at that point Christina continued to display a kind of passivity to those around her; she had provided all of the interpretations yet she was unable to move. The final phase of her recovery depended once more upon her own reporting of the situation.[137]

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[134] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 40, 200.

[135] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, Ch. 4.

[136] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 122: "Quinta autem feria, dum intravimus ad cantandum, cessauit a vexacione eius et recedens extra capellam clamabat: 'Ve, ve, quia nam nichil mali possum tibi facere.'"

[137] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitt*, 122: "Sequenti vero die, que erat dies conuersionis sancti Pauli, dum in matutinis cantabatur Te Deum, restituta est sibi loquela, laudabat et illa Deum, dum autem thurificabantur ymagines, sensit naturalem thuris odorem, et dum eleuabatur corpus Christi in prima missa, receipt visum clare videns hostiam in manibus sacerdotis. Quod cum diceret circumstantibus, repleta est capella clamore alta voce laudancium Jhesum Christum."

> But the following day, which was the day of the conversion of St. Paul, while we were singing the Te Deum at Matins, her speech was restored to her, and she praised God, and when incense was burned at the images, she smelled the natural scent of the incense, and when the body of Christ was raised at the first Mass, she was given clear vision, seeing the host in the hands of the priest. And when she told this to those standing around, the chapel was filled with the sounds of voices raised in the praise of Jesus Christ.

Christina moved and spoke; Christina told others that her senses had been restored to normal. The narrator's concluding claim that "after that she left completely free, *as she wished*" (emphasis mine) certainly becomes compelling when we consider that, ostensibly, Christina was a passive victim, forced to go on pilgrimage by physical compulsion and freed by the intercessory actions of her community, the community at Vadstena, and St. Birgitta of Sweden.

We are left, then, with no single estimation of Christina; she remains a pivotal motivator, and yet is presented as passive. There are a number of ways to parse this conundrum. If we choose, for example, to frame Christina's possession as conscious and purposeful resistance to her marriage, then her passivity was an exceedingly effective ploy, used to change her social situation. After all, the possession resulted in a long-term suspension of her duties as wife. But we need not choose to read this as resistance. The authors have also left us with the ability to read Christina as a passive victim of demonic possession, of mental illness, or even of parental and spousal abuse. Any such choice would be problematic, as Christina's subjective experience was not recorded in the text of he miracle; instead, her experiences, like the Devil's presence, were mediated and the textual version of events was negotiated among several authors. The written text framed Christina neither as wholly pitiable, nor wholly damnable; instead, Christina occupied an ambiguous space that allows readers to choose, at their convenience, from a great many conclusions about who had power or culpability in this matter, when, and how.

I would argue that this reflects the authors' many goals, which were best served when they focused not on what Christina 'really' experienced, but rather on her external behavior, and on the extraordinary functionality of that behavior. Far from being a nuisance, Christina's possession had very specific utility for each of the players in her drama. For Christina herself, a performance of possession allowed her to express either dissent or illness (physical or spiritual) in an acceptable fashion.

Regardless of how we choose to situate the motivations for her oppositional behavior, the fact that it was interpreted as possession provided her with an opportunity to behave disobediently without being held entirely culpable for her own disobedience—to be active while being interpreted as passive.[138] Meanwhile, "possession" was an interpretive category that provided her husband the opportunity to uphold both his marriage and his dignity. Within the framework of possession, his wife was not rejecting him, but rather the Devil was; and even more happily, the Devil could be cast out, restoring a functional and relatively blameless wife to him.[139] As he sought to have this Devil cast out, he himself could engage in an active struggle against a formidable and masculine adversary, rather that passively suffering a humiliating dismissal of his authority or his needs by someone who ought to be subordinate and obedient to him.[140] Possession created a character into which both Christina and her husband could pour the agency that neither of them might have found it useful or safe to place in Christina's hands.

The possession served larger communities, as well. As her husband's standing in the community would in part have been dictated by having a functional marriage, and his friends found the function of that marriage important enough to be willing to undertake the journey with him, it seems reasonable to suggest that the community of Bro would have found a certain solace or relief in Christina's restoration. So, too, would the community of nuns who oversaw her exorcism. Birgitta's saintly reputation was well-established by her death in 1373, and her canonization was approved by 1391. Thus, the events of Christina's possession took place and were recorded while a recently-deceased and favored local candidate for sainthood was very much in the public consciousness. Her canonization would affirm the sacred status of a beloved local figure and also helped to cement the position of the shrine at Vadstena as a legitimate and efficacious pilgrimage destination. It was therefore to the advantage of the community at Vadstena for Christina's possession to be performed and portrayed as supernatural and powerful,

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[138] Again, see Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England*, 26.

[139] On the blamelessness of demoniacs, see Newman, "Possessed by the Spirit," 737; Flanagan, "Heresy, Madness, and Possession," passim.

[140] For a summary on the authority of husbands and the expected obedience of wives, see Margaret Wade LeBarge, *A Small Sound of the Trumpet: Women in Medieval Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 36–43.

so that it might provide compelling evidence of the sanctity of their patron. Furthermore, the text also touts the effectiveness of the nuns' own intercessory prayers, which are listed in precise detail.[141] It was while the nuns were arriving to sing hymns, two days after Christina's initial arrival, that the devil left the chapel. And it was while they were singing again, a day later, that Christina regained her power of speech, with her other senses following quickly.[142] Her story thus advertised that pilgrims and donors to the shrine at Vadstena could expect to find effective advocates both in Birgitta and in the living community she founded there. Hence, that community's investment in the story and outcome of Christina's possession was as deep as that of Christina, her husband, and their home community in Bro. The slipperiness of agency in the written version of events allowed the text to suit each of those purposes admirably.

However neatly the construct of possession served a variety of needs in the moment, it was still not perfectly effective. Instead, Christina's first and most dramatic exorcism at Vadstena did not take. Christina stayed at the shrine for ten days after her initial cure, but when she returned to her home—and presumably, her usual duties—the Devil asserted himself once more. "But on the third day after she re-entered her house, once more she was snatched by a demon and her whole body was deprived of strength, however it was lighter, as she herself admitted, than when she was vexed before."[143] Given that the initial journey from Bro to Vadstena had taken ten days, and that they remained at the monastery ten days before undertaking the return trip, by this time it was now approximately 17 February. Her husband did not wait so long this time; by approximately 20 March he had reappeared at Vadstena with Christina in tow. Although her final cure was described in a more abbreviated fashion, we do learn that in this most recent bout Christina had once more lost her sight and her 'utility:' "and on the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin (25 March) she regained her sight

[141] For example, see Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 122: "Sequenti vero die, qeu erat dies sabbati, congregatis omnibus in loco cantare scientibus, post nonam et completorium cantauimus ad expellendum ab ea malignum spiritum ymnum 'Veni creator spiritus,' ter cantando versum illum 'Hostem repellas' etcetera, jtem 'Ave stella matutina' et antiphonam pro reliquiis…"

[142] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 122.

[143] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 123: "Sed tercia die, postquam domum suam ingressa est, jterum a demone arrepta est tociusque corporis valitudine priuata, leuius tamen, vt ipsamet fatebatur, quam prius vexata fuit."

and the services of all her limbs…"[144] As before, she was carried by her husband, and she saw the devil going along with her. She relayed the speech, and decisions, of the demon: "with the demon going forth from her he {spat} in her face and {said}, while she was near, as she was carried into the chapel: 'Now you are made entirely worthless, and I go away from you and choose a more beautiful one.'"[145] Here we see Christina both actively interpreting the Devil, explaining in dramatic terms that she is not possessed any more, while at the very same time she was unable to walk, and was being passively carried into the shrine by her husband.

The fact of her return to the shrine left the nuns with a problem, however: had Birgitta failed? In order to defend the effectiveness of their nascent cult, the community at Vadstena invoked the partial culpability of the demoniac. "O lord Jesus, who knows what is hidden, you know the reason why she was struck a second time, but it seems to us that she thanked you less for the gift she accepted than she ought to have, and was it not, therefore, because of ingratitude that she was handed over, afflicted by an evil spirit again…?"[146] The fluidity in questions of agency or culpability was maintained even here. Christina's own sinful nature was to blame for her renewed possession, but the possession "afflicted" her in ways for which the Devil was to blame. To muddy the waters further, the renewal of that possession was inscribed as a 'handing over' and, as any editor might point out, was phrased as an agentless passive.

In sum, one cannot help but notice that Christina, a passive victim of the diabolic, carried, dragged, carted, and otherwise physically compelled as she may have been, was still the architect of much of this pilgrimage. As we have seen, her words and acts compelled her husband to take her to Vadstena. Throughout, she was the arbiter of the Devil's influence. And in the end, she did not assume the new

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[144] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 123: "…et in festo annunciacionis beate virginis visus et omnium membrorum debita et vigorosa recuperabat officia…"

[145] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 123: "…discedente ab ea demone et spuente in faciem eius ac dicente, dum prope esset, vt portaretur in capellam: 'Jam vilissima facta es, recedamque a te et eligam pulcriorem.'"

[146] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 123: "O Domine Jhesu, secretorum cognitor, tu scis causam, quare ista secundo percussa est, sed nos vidimus eam pro accepta gracia minus regraciari tibi quam deberet, nonne ergo propter ingratitudinem maligno spiritui iterum affligenda tradita est…"

and demanding social role of wife until such time as *she* told bystanders that the Devil had left her. By the time she was finally cured and returned home once more on approximately April 5, she had played her new role as a sexual partner and a maintainer of the household for six days at most since her marriage on November 11. The actions of the devil, as mediated by Christina, delayed the normal course of her marriage for an entire winter, but left her largely blameless, or at least forgivable in the matter. In the end, we must at least admit the possibility that although she twice walked the straight and narrow path, it may have been because she deliberately chose to do so. She was supported in that choice because it served the needs of those around her, as well as her own.

Conclusions

Pilgrimage, a ritual at least theoretically open to all Christians and one that, unlike the sacraments, adhered to no universal standard of clerical leadership and control, was unsurprisingly open to a variety of interpretations. No facets of the practice demonstrate this better than the commitment to text, roughly a quarter-century apart, of the stories of Alison of Bath and of Christina Coppir. The same ritual that, when taken up by a woman, often drew criticism from her community might also be forced on women by that community, depending upon the circumstances and needs they collectively faced. Indeed, women, who were so likely to be the target of anti-pilgrimage attacks, were in my sources the group most statistically likely to be forced to visit a shrine.

A simple formula seems to have determined who was a candidate for a compulsory pilgrimage. It was most frequently applied to women who were considered either dangerous or useless, or both, but were simultaneously considered only partially culpable for these behaviors because they were thought to lack the maturity, the sense, or the will to prevent their descent into dangerous behavior. These women could not function properly within their home contexts, unlike the women who figured in satire and prescriptive literature, who were imagined to function poorly outside of them. Those who were violent or carried heresy were a danger to the well-being of their families by staying, rather than in going; those who were 'useless' in various ways were failing in their roles as women not by going away and leaving their kin without their services, but instead by remaining at home in a nonfunctional

state. To send them on a journey therefore became a necessity for the well-being of both themselves and their families. Whatever dangerous influences they might encounter on the road, they were unlikely to be much worse than the problems they already posed at home.

But the seemingly enormous distance between the experiences of Margery Kempe and Christina Coppir was actually the result of precisely the same social concern: the desire to integrate women into social hierarchies as obedient and hardworking caregivers to families who relied upon their efforts for survival and basic comforts. Women who defied tightly-defined social roles by becoming pilgrims and leaving their duties behind were castigated. Women who defined their pilgrimages as a family duty had the opportunity to construct a positive image of their travel. Women who voiced their rebellion within the home through aberrant belief or aberrant behavior might instead sent forcibly to shrines in order to correct them, and to prove their correction and rehabilitation to the communities their rebellion had threatened. Further, neither Margery nor Christina experienced a pattern of consistent, polar opposition between rebellious women and masculine authority. Women who faced resistance to their voluntary pilgrimages from one man were apt to find support from another; feminine demoniacs who appeared to be tightly controlled by men could in fact be powerful agents and decision-makers. Each pilgrimage, then, was a negotiated event. While the concept of the feminine as inferior was axiomatic for all, that concept was only one piece in the distinctive conglomerate of attitudes, needs, and personalities that surrounded every single journey.

CHAPTER SIX

"THAT YOU CANNOT SEE THEM COMES ONLY FROM AN IMPOSSIBILITY:" WOMEN AND NON-CORPOREAL PILGRIMAGE

For medieval Christians, pilgrimage was a desirable activity for three overlapping reasons. This remarkably flexible practice provided consolation of the body in the form of healing, consolation of the soul in the form of indulgences and deepened religious devotion, and (in spite of its inconveniences) also the opportunity to experience the sheer excitement of travel. As we have seen, access to these benefits sometimes lay beyond significant social and economic barriers such as cost, family responsibility, cloistration, and contested interpretations of the practice. Given this combination of desirability and difficulty, it is unsurprising that pious Christians sought ways to accrue the benefits of pilgrimage without the bother of travel. Concepts such as posthumous penance done on behalf of a Christian suffering in purgatory, location-based indulgences, and even the experiences of visionaries had, by the fifteenth century, contributed to the invention of a variety of non-corporeal pilgrimage practices. These were pilgrimages taken by proxy or in the imagination, rather than by an individual in the flesh. All types of non-corporeal pilgrimage had two things in common: they all involved a journey, either of persons, objects, or thoughts; and they all conferred at least one of the benefits of pilgrimage listed above. The participants in non-corporeal pilgrimage were as diverse as medieval society itself. In particular, because non-corporeal pilgrimage removed the complexity of actual travel from the equation, it was a practice women might undertake with little fear of recrimination. Indeed, some versions of non-corporeal pilgrimage were designed expressly for women's use.

This chapter will explore women's participation in three varieties of non-corporeal pilgrimage. The first, proxy (sometimes called vicarious) pilgrimage, posed the largest economic challenge to the would-be pilgrim. In this ritual, another person's travel was sponsored by the non-corporeal pilgrim, and the spiritual benefits of the pilgrimage were conferred upon the sponsor. Proxy pilgrimage allowed women to avoid the social

inconveniences of religious travel, but did not eliminate the costs of the journey. Still, scattered examples of the practice remain, particularly in wills. In another form of non-corporeal pilgrimage, devotees sought and kept small objects that had either visited a shrine or been collected or produced there, and were carried back home by fleshly pilgrims. These objects were thought to carry some of the benefits of a visit to the shrine back to the stationary devotee. This practice is extensively documented in the pilgrimage narratives that formed the basis of Chapter Four; the objects they describe were often thought to offer benefit for women's health. Finally, devotional guides of the later Middle Ages advised their readers on how to perform a non-corporeal pilgrimage through prayer and imagination alone. These spiritual pilgrimages could be conducted at no cost and no risk, and hence might have been ideal for women who sought the benefits of pilgrimage; indeed, at least two of them, Fra Francesco Suriano's *Treatise on the Holy Land* and Felix Fabri's *Die Sion-pilger*, were designed specifically for the use of women religious.

Proxy or Vicarious Pilgrimage

The most direct way of taking a pilgrimage while not moving was to send another person as a substitute. This practice was based on a significant body of Christian theology. The crucifixion was an act of penitential sacrifice that atoned for the sins of others, and thus Jesus himself had set an example of such ritual substitutions. Christians also prayed on behalf of other people, both during those people's lives and after their deaths; the prayers of others were considered efficacious enough, for example, that they formed one of the centralmost social and spiritual utilities of the monastic life.[1] By the later Middle Ages, it was also considered effective to send another person to take a pilgrimage on one's own behalf. Labande associated the development of proxy pilgrimages with the thirteenth-century practice of commuting personal pilgrimage vows in favor of large charitable donations.[2]

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[1] Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 160–161; see also Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 32.

[2] Edmond-René Labande, "Qu'est-ce qu'un pèlerin vicaire?" in *Cristanitá ed Europa: miscellanea di studi in onnore di Luigi Prodocimi* Vol. 1, ed. Cesare Alzati (Rome: Herder, 1994), 265–272.

Sumption also related this development to the uses of proxies and of payments in fulfilling Crusader vows, suggesting that it followed naturally that pilgrimage vows, too, were eventually considered a transferable commodity.[3] However, the leap from payments to the sending of a proxy individual was not immediate, and the use of proxy pilgrims seems not to have blossomed before the Black Death.[4] Nonetheless, by the fifteenth century, the idea that a person could take a pilgrimage on another's behalf was considered perfectly normal, if "never entirely respectable."[5]

It should be noted that the intercessory vows made in Chapter 3 by women seeking miracles on behalf of their family members differed from proxy pilgrimage. In the vast majority of miracle stories, the object of the intercession herself made the pilgrimage along with the person who had made the vow on her behalf. The language of such vows makes it clear why this was so; some such vows were described as being 'made *for*' the object of intercession, and other stories say that the object of intercession was 'vowed *to*' or 'commended *to*' the saints. Either way, the vows almost always implied that just as in the case of Beatrice Shirley, the object of the intercession would be delivered by the intercessor, sometimes along with more conventional gifts, to the saint's doorstep. As a result, only four out of all 711 miracle stories tell of situations wherein one person truly became the proxy pilgrim for another. In two cases, husbands on the verge of losing their wives to illness vowed that they (the husbands) would visit an image of St. Bridget at the Church of St. Mary of Carmel.[6] However, this type of voluntary intercession still differs sharply from cases where a devotee made the deliberate choice to send a proxy, as these wives did not request that the pilgrimages be made; indeed, in one case the wife was being cared for at her mother's home while her husband made the vow elsewhere.[7] In another miracle, Henry Walter de Guildford, having been healed by Henry VI of his cannonball wound, sent a wax

[3] Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), 296.

[4] Francine Michaud, "The pilgrim, the priest, and the beguine. Ascetic tradition vs. Christian humanism in late medieval religious practices," *Pecia: resources en médiévistique* 1 (2002), 165, fn. 56.

[5] Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion*, 298.

[6] Isak Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte* (Stockholm: Uppsala, 1924–1931), 170–171 and 173–174.

[7] Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte*, 170–171.

image of himself to Henry's shrine with his sister "as a surrogate." But Henry sent this proxy *after* he had already completed a pilgrimage of his own; it represented a desire to do the saint honor beyond what was normally expected, rather than a simple substitution.[8] Meanwhile, only once in seven miracle collections, in the case of a demoniac named Margiulia, did a woman act as a proxy pilgrim; Margiulia's mother took the pilgrimage as a substitute for her daughter, who had been cured by St. Yves.[9]

The conscious commissioning of a proxy pilgrim by women in less dramatic circumstances is quite difficult to trace in any aggregate sense. Scattered sources do record pilgrimages commissioned by elite women. For example, the fourteenth-century French countess Mahaute d'Artois sent a proxy to Compostela, and the fifteenth-century English queen Elizabeth of York sent proxies to several shrines as a part of her extensive pilgrimage-based devotional program.[10] But documentation of such arrangements is somewhat unusual, perhaps because of the proxy commissions' costs, which would be similar to what one might spend on a personal trip. But it might also be rare because there was no particular reason why such arrangements would always have been written down, especially if both pilgrim and proxy were not members of the elite who kept household account-books. As Sumption noted, "it was easy enough to find a man who was minded to go anyway. Most vicarious pilgrimages were informal arrangements like that of the bishop of Lincoln, who gave Margery Kempe twenty-six shillings and eightpence as she was leaving for Palestine, 'to buy her clothes and to pray for him.'"[11] Caciola noted a story from Johannes Nider's *Formicarius* which hinged on a similarly informal proxy arrangement.

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[8] Paul Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1935), 101: "Quod ubi ille didicereat, nondum scilicet secura preditus sospitate, sorore as hoc ilico surrogata, illuc in cera sue similitudinis premisit ymaginem."

[9] "De S. Yvo Presbytero Trecorii in Britannia Armorica," *Acta Sanctorum*, May IV, 573.

[10] See Eamon Duffy, "Religious belief," in *A Social History of England 1200–1500*, ed. Rosemary Horrox and W. Mark Ormrod (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 317; Anne Crawford, "The Piety of Late Medieval English Queens," in *The Church in Pre-Reformation Society*, ed. Caroline M. Barron and Christopher Harper-Bill (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1985), 52; and the excellent web page by Denise Péricard-Méa, "Profiles of Queens and Princesses on Pilgrimage to Compostella," trans. Christiane Buuck, http://www.saint-jacques.info/anglais/queens.htm (accessed June 2, 2007).

[11] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 299.

In the tale, a charlatan in Berne convinced the townspeople that they were being haunted and that he would take a pilgrimage on the restless spirit's behalf; "and while journeying to these saints' shrines for the above mentioned souls, he acquired…not a little money."[12] Written contracts between proxies and sponsors of middling means are quite rare.[13] Nevertheless, it should be noted that living women did sponsor proxies, and this must surely have been a convenient option for a woman who had the money to go on a pilgrimage but, for whatever reason, was unable or unwilling to take one herself.

The hire or sponsorship of a proxy pilgrim could also be undertaken as a testamentary bequest, so that the pilgrimage would take place after the sponsor's death. Postmortem pilgrimages met one of the main goals of a medieval will: to ensure a final round of charitable deeds and good works. By the later Middle Ages, such postmortem good works were considered necessary if a sinner (and all Christians were sinners) were eventually to pass through Purgatory and into Heaven.[14] These charitable bequests might fund social relief efforts such as feeding the poor, supporting lepers or hospitals, or (especially in the Mediterranean) providing dowries for poor women.[15] They also offered various sorts of support for the fabric of the Church, funding church repairs or the purchase of candles.[16] A third sort of charitable bequest left money to support clerics, monks, nuns, and friars, and requested that prayers and

[12] Nancy Caciola, "Spirits seeking bodies: death, possession, and communal memory in the Middle Ages," in *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 669; she quotes from Johannes Nider, *Formicarius sive Myrmeciia Bonorum* (Duaci: Baltazaris Belleri, 1602), 181–1.

[13] Indeed, the only reference to such contracts I have located is to a body of about one hundred from fourteenth-century Lübeck. The burghers of the Hanse were unusually fond of proxy pilgrimage. See Labande, "Qu'est-ce qu'un pélerin vicaire?," 269; and Paul Riant, *Expéditions et pèlerinages des Scandinaves au temps des croisades* (Paris: Imprimerie de Ad. Lainé et J. Havard, 1865), 381.

[14] See Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), esp. Ch. 9; Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Weaver, 173–198; and Clive Burgess, "'Longing to be prayed for': death and commemoration in an English parish in the later Middle Ages," in *The Place of the Dead*: ed. Gordon and Marshall, 49.

[15] See Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Weaver, 181–183; also Steven Epstein, *Wills and Wealth in Medieval Genoa, 1150–1250* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 167–192.

[16] Burgess, "'Longing to be prayed for'," 52–3, 59–60; Ralph Houlbrook, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480–1750* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1998), 114–115.

Masses be said by those clerics for the soul of the deceased.[17] Almost all of these bequests were intended to gain either prayers or indulgences for the testator, thus speeding his or her soul through the suffering of Purgatory; indeed, many of them come with specific requests for such prayers to be offered by the beneficiaries of the bequests.

Rare, but not entirely absent, among this profusion of charitable bequests in later medieval wills were donations intended to fund a proxy pilgrimage.[18] Where they appear, these pilgrimage bequests were specific about the destination the testator wished the proxy to visit. This held true whether the testator was sending someone to a single well-known shrine, as did several fifteenth-century English testators who sent proxies to Rome, or to a less distant shrine, as did Jehanne the wife of Oudard d'Orgny, who sent a pilgrim from her home in St. Quentin to Notre Dame de Lianche (Liesse), some twenty-seven miles distant.[19] The wills' specificity about the proxy him- or herself varied. Sometimes the will named a proxy pilgrim from the testator's circle of family and friends. Maria the widow of Benedict Bruisso, who made her will in Venice in 1337, was precise in her instructions. She bequeathed "five large solidi to a woman who is going to Assisi, and if Caterina Furlana wishes to go she may have them." She added that if Caterina did not wish to go, then the executors should find some other proxy.[20] In other cases, the testator specified the type of person who should be hired. England, whose donors were fond of chantry endowments, tended to express the same impulse to have Masses said when they requested a pilgrimage; hence, in Sudbury, it was most common among pilgrimage bequests to ask specifically that a priest go to Rome on one's behalf. While there the priest was to say a Mass "called *Scala Celi*."[21] Still other

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[17] Paul Binski, *Medieval Death*, 32; Epstein, *Wills and Wealth in Medieval Genoa*, 152–156; also Burgess, "'Longing to be prayed for'," 57.

[18] The practice is noted by Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Weaver, 72; Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 297; and Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage, c. 700–c. 1500* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 147–148.

[19] See Peter Northeast, ed., *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1439–1474: Wills From the Register 'Baldwyne,' Part I: 1439–1461*, Suffolk Records Society Volume XLIV (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2001), numbers 20, 124, 144, 180, 194, 212, 288, 775, and 1209; Pierre Desportes, ed. *Testaments Saint-Quentinois du XIV^e Siècle* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2003), number 17.

[20] Andrea Bondi Sebellico, ed., *Felice de Merlis, Prete et notaio in Venenzia ed Ayas (1315–1348)* Vol. II (Venice: Il Comitato Editore, 1978), 91: "Item dimmitto dandos uni mulieri que vadat Asisam pro anima mea soldos quique grossorum et si Caterina Furlana ire voluerit ipsos habeat, alioquin dentur alie cui videbitur commissaries meis."

[21] On the growth in popularity of chantries in England, see K. L. Wood-Legh, *Perpetual Chantries in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 4–5; and

testators simply requested the hire of a proxy, with no specifics as to that person's identity or profession.

However, bequests for proxy pilgrimage do not seem to have been particularly common. In his detailed work on wills from Genoa between 1150 and 1250, Stephen Epstein classifies pilgrimage bequests as "a last miscellaneous charity," saying that "the laity believed that pilgrimages could be made for them and would even confer benefits after death. The church did not discourage this view, yet more people made wills while preparing for pilgrimage than left money to have others go for them."[22] Pilgrimage may have become more common as time went on, but it remained, in the wills I have examined from the later Middle Ages, a relatively unusual bequest. A series of 122 fourteenth-century wills from the largely-rural Forez in eastern France contains no pilgrimage-related bequests.[23] One might, perhaps, attribute this to the relative poverty or rural immobility of that population; but urban wills also provide few examples of proxy pilgrimage bequests. The forty-nine wills taken down by the fourteenth-century Venetian notary Felice de Merlis among the urbanized, seafaring, and pilgrimage-friendly Venetians contained only two testamentary bequests in support of pilgrimage; and the records of several other Venetian notaries of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries are completely bare of such bequests.[24] A group of forty-seven wills from fourteenth-century Saint-Quentin in Picardy, a region whose population was both urbanized and mobile, yields a relatively large percentage, with four bequests for pilgrimage.[25] Although the editor of the fifteenth-century English wills from Sudbury claimed that "many testators asked for pilgrimages to be done for them," closer scrutiny

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Alan Kreider, *English Chantries: The Road to Dissolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 5–6. Examples of wills containing a bequest for Masses in Rome appear in Northeast, ed., *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury*, numbers 1209 and 413; see also numbers 20, 144, 180, 194, 212, 288, 755, and 1209.

[22] Epstein, *Wills and Wealth in Medieval Genoa*, 197–198.

[23] Marguerite Gonon, ed. *Testaments Foreziens, 1305–1316.* (N.p., 1951).

[24] Sebellico, ed. *Felice de Merlis, Prete et notaio*, numbers 1102 and 1108. Other Italian published notary collections which contain wills but no pilgrimage bequests include Sandro de Colli, ed., *Moretto Bon: Notaio in Venezia, Trebisonda e Tana (1403–1408)* (Venice: Il Comitato Editore, 1963), and Franco Rossi, ed., *Servodio Peccator: Notaio in Venezia e Alessandria D'Egitto (1444–1449)* (Venice: Il Comitato Editore, 1983). Sergio Perini, ed., *Susinello Marino: Notaio in Chioggia Minore (1348–1364)* (Venice: Il Comitato Editore, 2001), yeilded only one example of a pilgrimage bequest.

[25] On the urbanization and mobility of the southern Low Countries, see Walter Simon, *Cities of Ladies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) introduction. The four wills in question can be found in Desportes, ed. *Testaments Saint-Quentinois du XIV^e Siècle*, numbers 4, 17, 32, and 34.

reveals that of 1035 full testaments in that collection, twelve, or 1.2%, requested a pilgrimage.[26] In the German cities, such bequests seem to have been more common, but still not a routine request. Bettin and Volksdorf's study of wills from fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Straslund noted that 220 out of 1017 wills referred to pilgrimages. But as the authors of that study were concerned about gross numbers of pilgrimages undertaken by the burghers, they did not differentiate between wills made by persons about to set off for pilgrimage and testamentary bequests for a postmortem pilgrimage.[27] Thus, something less than 21% of the Straslund wills—perhaps, as low as the 10% represented by the four wills from Picardy?—contained pilgrimage bequests. Even if proxy pilgrimage was more common in German-speaking regions than elsewhere, it still seems inaccurate to casually refer to pilgrimage bequests as "common" in Latin Europe.[28] Certainly, they were not as common as bequests that paid for the saying of Masses, benefited the fabric of churches, or supported groups of religious.

It seems sensible to suggest that such bequests were relatively rare in part for economic reasons. Pilgrimage, no matter who carried it out, was costly, and long-distance pilgrimages to Rome, Compostela, and Jerusalem were beyond the means of most people.[29] The cost in Sudbury to send a priest to Rome as a proxy pilgrim was 20 marks; by comparison, that same money would pay for eight years' worth of Masses to be said by a local priest for the soul of the testator.[30] Further, although many wills do not specify an amount to be paid for the proxy pilgrim, the majority of the people who made pilgrimage bequests were clearly affluent. Maria, a Venetian widow, could afford extensive spiritual bequests, including paying for 2,300 Masses to be said for her soul. When she requested postmortem pilgrimages, it was at the tail end of her long list of spiritual bequests, and yet she sent people to the nearby and hence inexpensive shrines of Rome, Ravenna, Assisi,

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[26] Northeast, introduction to *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury*, ed. Northeast, l.

[27] Harmut Bettin and Dietmar Volksdorf, "Pilgerfahrted in den Stralsunder Bürgertestamenten als Spiegel bürgerlicher Religiosität," in *Der Jakobuskult in Ostmitteleuropa: Austasch—Einflüsse—Wirkungen*, ed. by Klaus Herbers and Dieter R. Bauer (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag Tübingen, 2003), 231–257.

[28] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 193, says this of English testators. Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 147, suggests the same about the burghers of Lübeck.

[29] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 204–205.

[30] See Northeast, ed., *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury*, numbers 194 and 288, 73 and 105.

and to St. Mark's in Venice itself.[31] Maroie l'Especiere, the wife of one of Saint-Quentin's leading burghers, also set forth a long, detailed, and expensive list of bequests for her soul. At the tail end of these bequests she sent four pilgrims in her name to churches dedicated to Our Lady: one to Bouloigne, two to Liesse, and one to Bony, all of which were clustered in northwestern France, not far from her home.[32] While these wealthy women chose pilgrimage, they chose many other forms of spiritual intervention as well, and they also chose pilgrimage destinations that were relatively cheap and nearby.

I would further assert that another reason why proxy pilgrimage was not, overall, a common bequest may have been the fear that it might not contribute effectively enough to the single most important goal of testamentary charity: to procure help for the soul in purgatory. Ideally, remembrance of a dead person, and through remembrance, prayer for his or her soul, should be offered on a regular basis. "The dead needed to be remembered," explained Eamon Duffy, "for the dead were, like the poor, utterly dependent on the loving goodwill of others… their names should be kept constantly in the memory and thus in the prayers of the living."[33] The most common bequests for the soul reflect this desire. Donations to chantries, visible gifts to church interiors, or alms to be given on death anniversaries were all intended to inspire the members of the testator's community to ongoing prayer for her soul. Pilgrimage, while it was doubtless a good deed, was in certain respects ill-suited to this cult of memory. It was expensive, absorbing a significant amount of money that could otherwise be invested in sustaining local memory; and yet it was neither local nor permanent, and thus lacked the ongoing local visibility that encouraged long-term intercessory prayer. Thus, even those who did sponsor pilgrimages usually balanced them with something both community-based and enduring. Unless a testator left a vow unfulfilled or had the means to send a pilgrim alongside other, more continuous forms of devotion, he or she may well have thought it better to make bequests which yielded longer-term returns on the investment than pilgrimage did.

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[31] Sebellico, ed., *Felice de Merlis, Prete et Notaio*, 91.

[32] Desportes, ed., *Testaments Saint-Quentinois du XIV^e Siècle*, 14.

[33] Duffy, *Stripping*, 328. The same concern about the remembrance of the dead by the living is noted by Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 293–294, and Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Weaver, 157–161, 174–175, and 181–188.

Although the bequest seems to have been a rare one, one editor of wills has noted that "it was women, above all, who believed in the efficacy of proxy pilgrimages made in the months immediately following their deaths."[34] While this was most true in Picardy, where all four of the pilgrimage bequests were made by women, it would be difficult to make a firm statement in support of this observation across Europe and across time. In my perusal of nearly 1,300 wills from England, France and Italy that date between 1314 and 1472, I have located only nineteen examples of postmortem pilgrimage bequests, of which seven appeared in wills made by women.[35] Evidence of women's participation in this form of devotion is as scattered as wills themselves, and no doubt more examples could be found; Rowena E. Archer, for example, documents three examples of noblewomen who sent proxies in their wills.[36] This is not enough evidence to suggest that postmortem proxy pilgrimage was a gendered practice, but it certainly suggests that the practice was by no means *un*available to female testators, should they have the money and inclination to commission one.

Even if postmortem proxy pilgrimages were not thought of as a specifically feminine practice, three of the seven women who sent proxies felt that those proxies should also be female. In 1337, both Maria the wife of Peter Superancio and Maria the widow of Benedict Bruiosso requested that their estates be used in part to sponsor proxy pilgrims, and both requested (in wills taken down by the same notary) that the proxies be women. The former Maria specified that her executors "send a woman to Rome and Assisi as a pilgrim for my soul," and as we have seen, the latter Maria began by simply asking that they give some money to "a woman who is going to Assisi," but later suggested a specific female proxy, Caterina Furlana.[37] Finally, Isabel Man, one of the few

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[34] Pierre Desportes, introduction to *Testaments Saint-Quentinois du XIV^e^ Siècle*, ed. Desportes, XLIII: "…ce sont sourtout des femmes qui croient à l'efficacité des pèlerinages effectués par procuration dans les mois immédiament le décès."

[35] The seven are located as follows: Sebellico, ed., *Felice de Merlis, Prete et notaio*, numbers 1102 and 1108; Desportes, ed., *Testaments Saint-Quentinois du XIV^e^ Siècle*, numbers 4, 17, and 32; and Northeast, ed., *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury*, numbers 1090 and 1466.

[36] Rowena Archer, "Piety in Question: Noblewomen and Religion in the Later Middle Ages," in *Women and Religion in Medieval England*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2003), 128–129.

[37] Sebellico, ed., *Felice de Merlis, Prete et notaio*, 75, "Item volo et ordino quod comissarii mei mittant unam mulierem Romam et Asisam peregre pro anima mea et ei provideant sicut sibi conveniens apparebit.;" and 91, "Item dimitto dandos uni mulieri que vadat Asisiam pro anima mea soldos quinque grossorum…"

women of modest means to commission a postmortem proxy pilgrimage, sponsored several pilgrimages to English shrines of the Virgin, including Woolpit and Walsingham. She requested that one Alice Obroke, to whom she also left "two of the best kerchers," be sent as proxy, and that she be "well paid for her labor and expenses."[38] Such cases perhaps reveal another side of the sense of cooperation and mutual support between female pilgrims that sustained Fabri's ancient matrons and, intermittently, aided Margery Kempe. Here, female pilgrims were not helping one another in person, but a dying woman was sponsoring the pilgrimage of a living woman, and a living woman could thus take on the approved roles of intercessor-pilgrim and caregiver.

If few people trusted postmortem proxy pilgrimage as an investment in their souls, why did any individual woman, or indeed any individual man, request them? Alas, wills are highly formulaic documents, and do not generally record the motivations behind testators' choices.[39] In only one case among the nineteen I located is motivation recorded with clarity: Richard Suttone of Oxborough, England made a will in 1451 which requested that several English pilgrimages be carried out by his attorney, explaining that he wished "my vows, which I made to diverse saints in time of necessity," be fulfilled.[40] Women, too, found themselves compensating in wills for unfulfilled vows: Duffy and Morrison have each located two similar examples in wills made by English women.[41] In most cases, however, nothing is said about the reasons for the bequest, and so we are left to wonder whether, like Richard, the pilgrimage-oriented testator died leaving an unfulfilled vow, or simply had a particular fondness for pilgrimage.

However, the immediacy of pilgrimage, which may have helped to make it a comparatively rare request, might also have had a benefit for some female testators, depending on their situation. Pilgrimage was in many cases a donation carried out all at once, unlike the bequests for chantries, anniversary Masses, and anniversary donations, which were often intended to go on indefinitely.[42] Medieval testators were deeply concerned about the reliability of their executors in carrying out these

[38] Northeast, ed., *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury*, 508.

[39] For information on the formulae used in most medieval wills, see Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Weaver, 188–193.

[40] Northeast, ed., *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury*, 187–188.

[41] Duffy, *Stripping*, 194–195; Morrison, *Women Pilgrims*, 51–2.

[42] On chantries and their institutional and financial structures in the later Middle Ages, see Wood-Legh, *Perpetual Chantries in Britain*, esp. Chs. II–IV.

longer-term bequests. According to Christopher Daniell, "(t)he dying were well aware of the temptation of executors to keep the money or not fulfill their duties."[43] Patricia Skinner has noted that already by the twelfth century, the majority of those Italian wills which specifically requested commemoration in "church services and necrologies" were made by women. "One conclusion that could be drawn from this," she wrote, "is that men were more likely to expect to be remembered, especially by their widows, and so did not need to make special provision, while women needed to ensure the survival of their memory in an age when remarriage was still common."[44] It is possible to speculate along similar lines that for some women, longer-term bequests may have seemed more risky than pilgrimages, which accrued spiritual benefit all at once. In sum, it could be the relatively weak social position of some women that led them to make such bequests.

Perhaps this sort of impulse was behind the will of Alice, the daughter of William Lundon of Thorndon, who dictated her will in June of 1454.[45] Alice was unusual in that pilgrimage formed the heart of her devotional bequests. In her brief will, Alice also seems oddly cut off from her family; although she mentions a "Peter Lundon of Thorndon," presumably a relative in that he shares her surname and hometown, she does not leave anything directly to him. Instead, her devotional bequests and her earthly ones are arranged as a package deal between herself and Richard Stale, her executor, whose relationship to Alice is not otherwise described. Her will states that Richard should inherit all of her goods, and that he should have "5 ac of arable land for 5 marks, on condition that he make a pilgrimage to Walsingham, to St. Nicholas in Tibenham, to Woolpit and to St. Margaret." From the proceeds of this land transfer he was also to have two trental Masses said for her. This arrangement constituted the entirely of her will, with one caveat: the bequest of the land to Richard was not to be a permanent one.

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[43] Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England, 1066–1550* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 33. See also Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes Towards Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Patricia M. Ranum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 63–64; Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Weaver, 181–182; and Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 297.

[44] Patricia Skinner, "Gender and memory in medieval Italy," in *Medieval Memories: Men, Women, and the Past, 700–1300*, ed. Elisabeth van Houts (Harlow: Longman/Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 47.

[45] Northeast, ed., *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury*, 377, contains the entire brief text of the will.

Alice stipulated instead that it was to belong to Richard only during his lifetime, and that after his death it was to revert to the mysterious relation, Peter, and his heirs. Unfortunately, the will does not explain the economic, legal, or social entanglements which prompted Alice to leave everything in the hands of a person who was not obviously of her family, nor does it explain why Peter would not have been a more appropriate executor and heir. Whatever her relationship with Richard might have been, she either did not wish him to have, or legally could not endow him with, the bulk of her meager fortune in perpetuity; and the more personal bonds of kinship would presumably have given a family member somewhat more long-term impetus to see to her soul's protection than an unrelated person like Richard would have. Nevertheless, her family was not to oversee the administration of her bequests, and Alice may have felt that pilgrimage to local shrines, a form of short-term, publicly visible and verifiable, yet spiritually effective postmortem care, was a bequest that Richard would be more likely to see through to completion than a longer-term scheme.

One useful counterexample that might help illustrate the connection between a lack of social ties and the choice to support postmortem pilgrimages is the will of Venetian crossbowman Damian da Chanal, who worked aboard one of the Contarini galleys and who made a will in London in 1472. Men, too, could be disengaged from local social networks, and Damian, given his profession, might have spent much of his adult life traveling. He, like Alice, left the majority of his charity in sponsorship of pilgrimages. Perhaps because he died in London, he specified pilgrimages to St. Paul's in London and to St. Thomas of Canterbury; however, he also requested pilgrimages to Marian shrines in Padua and Loreto, and at Sancta Maria de Grazia in Venice itself, to which he also offered a monetary gift. The only bequests he made that were not pilgrimage-related were of three ducats to the galley's chaplain (in exchange for Masses to be said for his soul), and of three candles to the monastery of San Francesco de la Vigna in Venice.[46] As in the case of Alice Lundon, none of these pilgrimages were long-distance, given that he came from Venice and died in London; presumably the proxies were intended to have been hired while the galley and its crew visited each of those ports. Damian regarded pilgrimage, rather than

[46] Lucia Greco, ed., *Quaderno di Bordo di Giovanni Manzini Prete-Notaio e Cancelliere (1471–1484)* (Venezia: Il Comitato Editore, 1997), 11.

longer-term strategies, as an efficacious way to protect his soul, and one that he could reasonably trust would be carried out despite his unusually rootless social circumstances.

Objects Making Pilgrimages

Proxy pilgrimages, then, were available for women who had the means to make such a bequest or commission, and may have been particularly appealing in some situations. But these costly proxy pilgrimages were only one of a variety of non-corporeal pilgrimage rituals available to both women and men. Those who saw in the use of a proxy a desirable direct link to a shrine might also choose to use a portable object, rather than a person, as that proxy. Objects associated with pilgrimage shrines provided something of the indulgences, sensory experiences, or healing associated with that location even to those who did not have the money to sponsor travel for themselves or another. As in the use of human proxies, the concept of object-proxies drew on longstanding theological axioms. Christian pilgrimage had, since its inception, been centered around the veneration of objects. The belief that a saint's physical remains, tomb, or personal possessions formed a bridge between the earthly and the divine lay at the very heart of the veneration of saints.[47] The same was true of the worship of Jesus himself; St. Helena supposedly located and popularized the veneration of the implements of the Crucifixion in the early fourth century.[48] This belief in the efficacy of physical objects as a means of passing on grace was extrapolated well beyond the holy person's body or tomb. From late Antiquity forward, Christians had also taken to venerating and employing *brandea*, or small pieces of cloth that had been in contact with the body of a saint or her tomb. Sumption noted Gregory of Tours' suggestion that a bit of cloth, placed in contact with the tomb of St. Peter and prayed over by a devout Christian, might actually become so imbued with grace that it weighed more than it had beforehand.[49] The use of such objects,

[47] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 3–5.

[48] Maribel Deitz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300–800* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 110–111.

[49] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 22.

sometimes called tertiary relics, to carry away grace from a shrine has proven a remarkably durable form of ritual. During the Middle Ages, a wide variety of small objects, from ampullae and pilgrim-badges to ribbons and jewels, were deliberately brought into contact with a shrine in the hopes of charging them with grace for later use.[50] Even now in the early twenty-first century, devout Catholics visiting the tomb of a recently-deceased pope have asked guards to touch their jewelry to his tomb and give the jewels back to them.[51]

Shrine-related items of various shapes and sizes were thought not only to be imbued with grace, they were also thought to be efficacious in matters of healing, just as a pilgrimage (or a vow of pilgrimage) to a shrine was. There are innumerable familiar cases in point. The dust wiped from a saint's tomb healed people, even at a distance from the tomb itself; pilgrimage badges bearing the image of a saint or a shrine were "believed to guard the wearer from evil."[52] Would-be pilgrims could thus expect to accrue some of the benefits of a bodily visit to a shrine through their interactions with objects which had either been sent to a shrine with another pilgrim or purchased at the shrine itself. As in the commissioning of proxy persons, proxy objects were available to anyone, as their use did not require the time or social complications of travel. They were also more affordable than proxy pilgrimages, as the only definite cost was that of the object itself, rather than that of sustaining the physical pilgrim who carried it hither and thither.

By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the business in pilgrimage memorabilia, just like the business of bodily pilgrimage, was booming. Objects of all description moved back and forth between shrines and homes on a regular basis. Women participated in this form of non-corporeal pilgrimage as enthusiastically as men, as both recipients and bearers of the objects in question. Nompar de Caumont, who went on pilgrimage in the early fifteenth century, brought back jewels from the Holy Land "to give to my wife and to the lords and ladies of my country."[53] Felix Fabri noted that all of his companions on his second

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[50] Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 165–166; on pilgrim-badges as conveyors of grace, see Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 175.

[51] "Pilgrims Visiting Pontiff's Grave," *CBS News*, April 13, 2005, http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/04/15/world/main688472.shtml (accessed June 1, 2007).

[52] A. M. Koldeweij, "Lifting the Veil on Pilgrim Badges," in *Pilgrimage Explored*, ed. J. Stopford (York: York Medieval Press, 1999), 163.

[53] Nompar, Seigneur de Caumont, *Le Voyatge d'Oultremer en Jherusalem de Nompar, Seigneur de Caumont*, ed. by Peter S. Noble (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975), 82: "Les quelles joyes de celuy pourtay pour donner a ma femme et aux seigneurs et dames de mon pais."

pilgrimage—presumably including the matrons—were carrying objects for others, and that he, "the poorest of all our company . . . had many precious jewels which had been lent to me by my friends, patrons, *and patronesses*, in order that I might touch them to the relics and holy places to which I came, and bring them back to them, receiving a reward for so doing" (emphasis mine).[54] Recall that the nuns of Vadstena, St. Birgitta of Sweden's foundation, kept "a small silver cross that the blessed Birgitta had placed on the sepulcher of our Lord in Jerusalem," which they used during the exorcism of Christina Coppir.[55] There appear to have been no limits whatever on women's participation in this form of non-corporeal pilgrimage, as in this case it was objects which carried out the objectionable travel, not women.

Indeed, the traffic in shrine-related objects was not only accessible to women, it was often designed specifically for their use. Many pilgrimage-related souvenirs were manufactured and sold to male pilgrims specifically for the use of the women in their family who remained at home. In particular, a number of items associated with the pilgrimages to long-distance shrines like Jerusalem and Rome were intended as cures for illnesses related to women's reproductive biology. As a pregnant or lactating woman was probably less likely than most to undertake such a long and arduous journey, this great profusion of gynecological aids must have been manufactured and sold with a long-distance market in mind.[56] The ubiquitous descriptions of gynecological souvenirs by male authors show that the benefit of these quasi-relics appealed not only to women, but to male pilgrims, who carried them home for the benefit of the women they left behind. Birth was a precarious moment not only for women, but also for male lineages, and hence men were

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[54] Felix Fabri, *The Wanderings of Felix Fabri*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, The Library of the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society (New York: AMS Press, 1971), vol. 7 & 8, 85 also Fabri, *Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Aegypti Perregrinationem*, ed. C. D. Hassler, in Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart (Stuttgart: Kosten des Literarischen Vereins, 1843), vol. II, 94: "Ego enim fui minimus, et pauperior in nostro societate, et tamne multa preciosa clenodia habui, quae mihi collata fuerant ab amicis et fautoribus et fautricibis meis, ut reliquias ad quas venirem et loca sancta cum eis contingerem, et eis pro munere reportarem."

[55] Isak Collijn, ed., *Acta et Processus Canonizacionis Beate Birgitte* (Stockholm: Uppsala, 1924–1931), 122: "…et ligata est super eius pectus crux argentea paruula, quam domina Brigida posuerat in sepulcro Dominj in Jerusalem…"

[56] I have located only one example of a pregnant pilgrim to Jerusalem, which appears in the travelogue of Felix Fabri. He tells of a pregnant noblewoman on board his galley, and mentions her only because she became ill and weak. Fabri, *Wanderings*, trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 41; also Fabri, *Evagatorium*, ed. Hassler, vol. II, 56.

enthusiastic shoppers where it came to this sort of memorabilia. Felix Fabri mentioned the "water of St. Peter" available in Rome, made of water infused with dust from St. Peter's shrine, "which one should give to women in their time of peril to drink, and they are saved from their peril."[57] He also described his fellow-pilgrims buying a number of candles to be lit within the Holy Sepulcher and immediately snuffed and kept, "and afterwards they took them home to their own country, where they made their wives hold them lighted while they were in childbed, that they might be delivered without danger, for they say that these candles are useful for that purpose."[58]

Many other objects associated with sacred sites were recommended for similar uses, and the range of possible associations between holy sites and safe childbirth was remarkably wide. Frescobaldi bought "certain silk ribbons, on the same measurements as the Sepulcher, which are good for women in travail."[59] These ribbons had neither been touched to that shrine nor even marketed near to it; Frescobaldi bought them in Alexandria. Despite the physical distance between the shrine and the ribbons—a distance that was never closed—a sympathetic connection was assumed to have been established because of the similarity of measure. This practice echoes the 'taking of measures' of sick persons whose proxies brought a candle to the shrine in the size of the intended beneficiary, only in this case, the measure of the shrine was brought to the person, rather than the other way around.[60] Meanwhile, Sir Richard Guylforde noted that stones taken from the vault where the Virgin Mary was born were "remedy and consolacion to women that

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[57] Fabri, *Wanderings*, trans. Stewart, Vol. 7 & 8, 85; also, Fabri, *Evagatorium*, ed. Hassler, vol. II, 87: "…Unde in plerisque mundi partibus recipiunt homines fideles hanc aquam S. Petri, et periclitantibus mulieribus in partu dant ad bibendum, et periculum evadunt…"

[58] Fabri, *Wanderings*, trans. Stewart, Vol. 7 & 8, 346–7; also, Fabri, *Evagatorium*, ed. Hassler, vol. II, 285: "Aliqui plures cereos emebant, quos in dominico sepulchro incendebant et reextinguebant, ducentes eos secum ad patriam et eorum mulieribus in partu laborantibus accensos tenere faciebant, ut sine periclitatione parerent. Dicunt enim candelas illas ad hoc esse ubiles." Apparently the candles could not only provide a safe delivery, but were also proof against the dangers inherent in allowing a parturient woman to handle an open flame while lying in bed.

[59] Leonardo Frescobaldi, "The Pilgrimage of Leonardo Frescobaldi," in *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine, and Syria in 1384 by Frescobaldi, Gucci & Sigoli*, trans. Theophilus Bellorini and Eugene Hoade (Jerusalem: The Franciscan Press, 1948), 42.

[60] On the taking of measures, see André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 456.

travaylle of Childe."[61] And Suriano mentioned "pregnant stones" to be found in the Holy Land; each of these stones had a smaller stone inside of it. He told the story of a woman who was unable to have children, who never miscarried again after he gave her one of these stones to carry. He further associated it with the stone set in the Virgin Mary's wedding ring.[62] Even the flora of the Holy Land held obstetric benefits. Pero Tafur described having gathered a particular flower in Jericho: "I gathered some of those roses which are beneficial to women in labor."[63]

Successful conceptions and safe deliveries were not the only gynecological outcomes that could be encouraged through interactions with pilgrimage-related objects. So too could successful lactation, a process whose success was equally vital to the perpetuation of lineages. The Cave of the Lactation, where the Blessed Virgin was said to have spilled some of her breast milk while hiding from Herod, was the source of a number of such curatives. According to Arnold von Harff, a spoonful of the white earth native to this cave solved more than one health problem for mothers. If women ingested this earth "who wish for a quick delivery . . . they are said forthwith to be delivered. If women at childbirth find their milk run dry and partake of it, then forthwith the milk is said to return."[64] The use of this earth as an aid for lactation was also commented on by Mario Sanuto in 1321 in a tract largely dedicated to strategic issues and entitled "Secrets for true crusaders to help them recover the Holy Land;" by Ludolph von Suchem in 1350, who mentioned that the earth of the cave "is taken away hither and thither by the pilgrims;" and by Santo Brasca in 1480, who promised that when given to a woman who has lost her milk, "it will return at

[61] Richard Guylforde, *The Pylgrymage of Sir Richarde Guylforde Knyght and controuler unto our late soveraygne lorde kynge Henry the Vii and howe he went with his servaunts and company towardes Jherusalem*, N.p., 1511, 42.

[62] Francesco Suriano, *Treatise on the Holy Land*, trans. Theophilus Bellorini, O.F.M. and Eugene Hoade, O.F.M. (1949; rpr., Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1983), 233. See also Francesco Suriano, *Il tratto di Terra Santa e dell'Oriente di Frate Francesco Suriano, missionario e viaggiatore del secolo XV*, ed. P. Girolamo Golubovich, O.M. (Milano: Tipografia editrice artigianelli, 1900), 235–236.

[63] Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures, 1435–1439*, trans. Malcom Letts (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1926), 60.

[64] Arnold von Harff, *The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff, Knight : From Cologne through Italy, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Ethiopia, Nubia, Palestine, Turkey, France, and Spain, which he accomplished in the years 1496 to 1499*, trans. Malcom Letts (London: Hakluyt Society, 1946), 189.

once."[65] Francesco Suriano mentioned a similar phenomenon using earth from the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, using strikingly visual and intimate terms, even though he was ostensibly writing for an audience of celibate women. He said that if a woman takes this medicine to renew her lactation, "their paps and breasts look like two fountains."[66] References to the use of such white earth continued to appear as late as Jehan Thenaud's account of 1512.[67]

Objects associated with pilgrimage, then, were not only cheap, easily available, and reputed to be effective, they were designed specifically for those who could not make the journey themselves. The preponderance of gynecological and obstetric aids among Holy Land souvenirs was a convenient way to meet the needs of women, to encourage their devotion to holy sites and symbolically include them in those journeys, without subjecting them to the costs, rigors, and risks (real and imagined) of travel. It is noteworthy, however, that these practices served the needs of men, as well; to protect either a woman in childbirth or a breastfeeding relationship was to protect not an individual, but also a partner or helpmeet, an economic or political alliance, an offspring, and a lineage. Successful childbirth and nursing were of tremendous significance to everyone within a family, and, as in the cases of women whose pilgrimages on behalf of their children raised them to the status of quasi-saints, gynecological souvenirs were a form of involvement in pilgrimage that could be celebrated by men and women alike because they helped women to fulfill a vital social role.

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[65] Mario Sanuto, *Part XIV of Book III of Mario Sanuto's Secrets for true crusaders: to help them recover the Holy Land*, tr. Aubrey Stewart, The Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, vol. XII (New York: AMS Press, 1971), 54; Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land and of the Way Thither*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, The Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, vol. XII. (New York: AMS Press, 1971), 96; and Santo Brasca, *Viaggio in Terrasanta di Santo Brasca*, ed. Anna Laura Momigliano Lepschy (Milan: Longanesi and Co., 1966), 105: "…et ha quela terra questa virtù, che chi la mette in uno bichiero de aqua et una dona che havesse perso lo lacte la beva, subito gli ritorna."

[66] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 137; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 124: "…paiono doe fontanele le poze e mamile."

[67] Jehan Thenaud, *Le Voyage d'Outremer (Égypte, Mont Sinay, Palestine) Suivi de la relation de l'ambassade de Domenico Trevisan auprès du Soudan d'Ègypte, 1512*, ed. Charles Schafer (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1971), 93.

Spiritual Pilgrimage

The hire of proxies was expensive, and while objects brought to and from a shrine offered healing or protection in an immediate sense, they did not convey indulgences. To duplicate the accrual of indulgences without financial loss or moral questions, late medieval devotees of pilgrimage turned to yet another form of non-corporeal pilgrimage: spiritual pilgrimages, undertaken through meditative prayer alone. There were a variety of written and visual aids designed to help devotees to go on imaginative pilgrimages; these aids to meditation were often either aimed at women or available to them. Nuns in Germany, for example, made and displayed images of specific pilgrimage sites or shrines and expected that in meditating upon them they would accrue the indulgences offered at the real shrines.[68] The possibility of undertaking a spiritual pilgrimage was also in part the purpose of writing out pilgrimage guides and itineraries. Renna has commented that "the authors of itineraries assume that the visitor will benefit spiritually, and that the *readers* of the texts will similarly profit. If one is unable to see the holy places personally, it will do to relive mentally the venerable myths of both Testaments. Pilgrimage literature is analogous to monastic *lectio*…"[69]

The use of pilgrimage texts for meditative reading and the imaginative reliving of a journey closely reflects devotional trends of the later Middle Ages. Much attention has been paid over the past two decades to the seeming epidemic of visionary mysticism in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, an intense, creative, and imaginative form of devotion claimed by many, especially women.[70] Devout Christians not only described revelatory visions, they also sought to create visions in a less

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[68] Kathryn M. Rudy, "A Guide to Mental Pilgrimage: Paris, Bibliothèque de L'Arsenal Ms. 212," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 63, no. 4 (2000), 513–514.

[69] Thomas Renna, "Jerusalem in Late Medieval Itineraria," in *Pilgrims and Travelers to the Holy Land*, ed. Bryan F. LeBeau and Menachem Mor (Omaha: Creighton University Press, 1996), 119–120.

[70] Some important studies of late medieval mysticism, especially that of women, include Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1987); Ulrike Wielthaus, ed., *Maps of Flesh and Light: The Religious Experience of Medieval Women Mystics* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993); Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism*, Vol. 3 of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1998); Rosalyn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writings of Late-Medieval Women Visionaries* (Suffolk: York Medieval Press, 1999); Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

inspired sense by deliberately imagining themselves into religiously-significant settings or engaging in imagined conversation with sanctified figures. Barbara Newman has termed these "heuristic" visions, which function in visionary writings as "a rhetorical means to explore the implications of an idea and express it more vividly."[71]

Pious Christians, then, often imagined themselves into holy spaces that they were not actually visiting. In recent essays, Sarah Stanbury and Virgina Chieffo Raguin each brought art historical expertise to bear on Margery Kempe's imaginative use and understandings of physical space. Stanbury explores several passages in which Kempe's devotional behaviors physically placed her body in proximity to saints' images, thus creating a visual field for her physical viewers that reproduced the configurations of donor portraits.[72] In so doing, Kempe was erasing the boundaries between herself and the real presence of the saints, and between daily life and devotional art—in sum, the boundary between physical reality and imagination. Raguin, on the other hand, noted the very concrete physicality of many of Kempe's descriptions; she delves into the real space of the parish church, where so much of Margery's *Book* plays out.[73] She argues that Margery's "memory of events is invariably linked to the physical experience of the site."[74] The sort of devout and focused imagining of spiritually significant events and people in which Margery and others engaged dovetailed neatly with the growing popularity of both pilgrimage and the writing of pilgrimage narratives. The connection between late medieval visionaries' focus on physical experiences and the detailed descriptions of the locations of the Holy Land in pilgrimage narratives has been noted before.[75] A pilgrimage taken via directed imagining, then, offered the poor, the cloistered, or those otherwise too encumbered to travel in body the opportunity to gain the benefits of pilgrimage for themselves by traveling in their imagination.

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[71] Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 300.

[72] Sarah Stanbury, "Margery Kempe and the Arts of Self-Patronage," in *Women's Space: Patronage, Place, and Gender in the Medieval Church*, ed. Sarah Stabury and Virginia Chieffo Raguin (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 75–104.

[73] Virginia Chieffo Raguin, "Real and Imagined Bodies in Architectural Space: The Setting for Margery Kempe's *Book*," in *Women's Space*, ed. Stanbury and Raguin, 104–140.

[74] Raguin, "Real and Imagined Bodies," 114.

[75] Dee Dyas, *Pilgrimage in Medieval English Literature, 700–1500* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 205. For Renna's discussion of these connections, see Renna, "Jerusalem in Late Medieval Itineraria," 124–125.

This imaginative practice shows itself in a variety of texts. For example, Kathryn Rudy has investigated the pilgrimage narrative and accompanying illustrations in Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsonal 212, arguing that instead of being a guide for physical travel, it served as "an entirely livresque pilgrimage experience, a mental guide for pilgrimage that is partially adapted from existing pilgrims' guides."[76] This Latin manuscript appears to have been made for a Franciscan friar, but a Franciscan nun owned another unillustrated vernacular version of the same text.[77] There were also guides to spiritual pilgrimage that were more a set of directions for the practice than a set of descriptions of the locales to be visited, and these were widely available to lay Christians; Sumption notes that these spiritual pilgrimage guides were a new form of devotion in the fifteenth century, and that "many hundreds of such works, some of them of extreme naïvety, circulated in northern Europe" at that time.[78]

A widespread example of a written spiritual pilgrimage guide was produced in Oxford the 1420s and later falsely attributed to Jean Gerson. Its goal was to provide the benefits of a Roman Jubilee pilgrimage to sedentary devotees. The spiritual Jubilee pilgrim was instructed to meditate upon each phase of the physical journey to Rome, saying 10 Pater Nosters per day, one for each league he would normally have walked, until he had imaginatively 'reached' the city. While 'there,' the spiritual pilgrim should meditate over the course of seven days on one of each of the seven principle churches of Rome. The pilgrim should then pray himself 'home,' and the entire 'journey' was expected to take fifteen weeks. The guide recommended that "if the person who makes this voyage is rich, she could make each day a charitable donation in lieu of the expenditures she would have made while traveling."[79] Finally, the spiritual pilgrim was encouraged to hear Mass each day—a public outing to a church, for which, as we have seen, women might also be criticized—and to remain sexually abstinent for the duration of the journey, just as a mobile pilgrim should.

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[76] Rudy, "A Guide to Mental Pilgrimage," 496–497.

[77] Rudy, "A Guide to Mental Pilgrimage," 514–515.

[78] Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, 300–301.

[79] Fifteenth-century French iterations of the text which have been edited and published by Edmond Vansteenberghe, "Pelerinage Spirituelle," *Revue des sciences religieuses* XIV (1934): 390–91: "Item, se la personne qui fait ce voyage est riche et ait bien de quoy, elle puet faire chascun jour aumosne en lieu des despens quelle feroit en cheminant." English translations are the author's own.

The Oxford tract was emphatically intended as inclusive, a form of devotion available to nearly anyone. It claims to address an audience described as 'simple people' (*gens simples*); this suggests that it was intended for the laity.[80] That laity need not even be affluent. The note towards the end of the tract suggesting the possibility of charitable donations was an afterthought, couched in the conditional tense, an especially good but not entirely necessary addendum to the (free) meditative practice. Even more intriguing, neither the content nor the language of the tract limited the audience by gender. The tract directs spiritual pilgrims through their pilgrimages in the third-person singular neuter: "First, *one* should place *oneself*…"[81] The instructions for the remainder of the pilgrimage only shift out of this third-person neuter when the pilgrimage has been completed. The author's final suggests that charitable donations be made by rich spiritual pilgrims suddenly shifts to the feminine, following on the feminine in French for 'a person,' *la personne*: "Item, if the person who is making this pilgrimage is rich and has many goods, *she* could make donations each day…"[82] Further, this grammatical feminization of the spiritual pilgrim lasts through the next suggestion: "Next, *she* could also visit some church each day…"[83] While this does not constitute proof that he author had women in mind as a target audience, his overall gender-neutrality coupled with his willingness twice to use the feminine term *la personne*—rather than the obvious masculine, *le pèlerin*—to refer to the user of his manual may suggest that he did not seek to exclude them, either.

Spiritual pilgrimage guides, much like visual images of shrines used by German nuns, could also be specifically tailored to the needs of a female audience. We have a detailed example of this from the late fifteenth century, about fifty years after the writing of the Oxford tract: the *Treatise on the Holy Land*, written by the Venetian friar Francesco Suriano. Suriano was from a wealthy family, and spent his adolescence in the Venetian merchant fleet. When he became a Franciscan in 1475, he was already a worldly traveler skilled in several languages, including Greek and Arabic. From 1481 to 1484, he served as superior to

[80] Vansteenberghe, ed., "Pelerinage spirituelle," 389.

[81] Vansteenberghe, ed., "Pelerinage spirituelle," 390: "Premierement on se mectra en lestat ou on oseroit mourir ou recevoir le corps nostre seigneur et mectra en peine de le bien garder."

[82] Vansteenberghe, ed., "Pelerinage spirituelle," 391.

[83] Vansteenberghe, ed., "Pelerinage spirituelle," 391: "Item, elle peut aussi chascun jour visiter aucune eglise selon laisement quelle a et oir messe ou faire sa devocion."

the Franciscans in Beirut, and from 1493 to 1515 he held the office of the Guardian of Mount Zion, overseeing Franciscans at Mt. Zion in Jerusalem and assisting all the European pilgrims who visited the site.[84] Suriano had a sister who joined the community of Poor Clares dedicated to Saint Lucy in Foligno, and when he visited her after his first stint in the Holy Land, he agreed to write out his impressions of the region for her spiritual edification and that of the sisters in her community. Kathryne Beebe has recently discussed a contemporary work with a remarkably similar history: Felix Fabri's *Die Sionpilger*, written c. 1495 for use by Dominican nuns.[85] Her conclusions will provide further context for this anlaysis of Suriano's text.

Suriano's *Treatise on the Holy Land* is an oddly hybrid document. Like so many later medieval Jerusalem travelogues, Suriano took the eleventh- and twelfth-century itineraries that briefly listed shrines and their indulgences and used it as a sort of skeleton, which he fleshed out with his own descriptions of each location.[86] This skeleton is clearly visible: at the beginning of each section the author lists all the significant locations in a given region, listing in some cases the specific indulgences available at each destination, and then he goes on to describe each one in prose.[87] But the *Treatise* departs from the conventions of later medieval pilgrimage narratives in one striking way: Suriano composed his prose descriptions of each location in the form of a dialogue between himself and his sister the nun.[88] The character of Sister Sixta posed questions about each location listed, and the character of Suriano obligingly filled her in. Their fictive exchanges reveal Suriano-the-author's struggle to meet the devotional needs of his sister and her community, which required him to cope with the diversity of opinions about women's pilgrimages, and particularly with skepticism about their flesh-and-blood pilgrimages to Jerusalem. The result is a text which blends the fear of women's mobility with outright encouragement of women pil-

[84] Belarmino Bagatti, introduction to Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 1–3.

[85] See Kathryne Beebe,"Mental Pilgrimage in Context: The Imaginary Pilgrims and Real Travels of Felix Fabri's 'Die Sionpilger,'" *Essays in Medieval Studies: Proceedings of the Illinois Medieval Association*, forthcoming.

[86] Renna, "Jerusalem in Late Medieval Itineraria," 120.

[87] See for example the itinerary-like list of the sites in Jerusalem itself in Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 102–3; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 89–91.

[88] Belarmino Bagatti, introduction to Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 12.

grims, and makes both of those attitudes serve the needs of his readers.

In light of the longstanding and strident attacks on the pilgrimages of women, Suriano's encouragement of cloistered women's curiosity about travel was potentially troublesome. Suriano met this concern head-on. He portrayed Sister Sixta as aggressively curious about travel, even as she herself spoke of the distrust of women's pilgrimages. She presented her curiosity and that of her sisters as the result of their pent-up lives; Sixta said that "I and all, my Abbess and Sisters, had great pleasure in hearing of the disposition of the world, since our hemisphere is bounded by the garden wall, and how Jerusalem is in the centre."[89] But from an early point in the text, Sixta also spoke in ways that sought to defuse such concerns. "As I am desirous of things spiritually new," she said at the beginning of the dialogue, "be not bored if in my questions if I am overly curious."[90] Here, Sister Sixta acknowledged the potential for a skeptical interpretation of her interests and of the *Treatise* itself, but she also introduced that concern with a counter-interpretation of her own: she was not idly curious, but rather a *spiritual* seeker. Much of this reframing hangs on the word "spiritual," an adjective simultaneously indicating that there was a praiseworthy impulse driving her questions, and yet reinforcing the fact that she had no intention of physically carrying out a pilgrimage. Suriano took pains that his fictive self should buttress this interpretation of her curiosity as spiritual: "I am greatly pleased that you take delight in the understanding of holy writ, especially in that pertaining to the Holy Land…"[91] He added to her reframing of her own curiosity a reframing of its object: in the fictive Suriano's mind, Sixta was not really interested in travel, but rather in Scripture. Suriano's positive interpretation was proven successful when Sixta herself acknowledged that this textual exploration of the Holy Land was adequately quenching her thirst for knowledge. "You show

[89] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 101; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 88: "Io insiema cum tute queste mie matre et sorele habiamo havuto grande consolatione per haver inteso la dispositione del mondo, cum sit che el nostro emisperio sono solamente sino alle mura de l'horto e non più; e como Hierusalem è situito in mezo de lui."

[90] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 21; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 3: "E perchè sum desiderosa de cosse nove spirituale, pertanto non te sia molesto se nelo addimandare, userò curiositade."

[91] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 23; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 6: "Molto me piace che te delecti de intendere la sacra scriptura, maxime pertenente ad questa terra sancta…"

yourself very kind," she said, "in satisfying me so humanely."[92] Her interest, then, was spiritual and textual in its orientation, and the book met those needs, rather than encouraging dangerous wandering.

With this safety net in place, the character of Sister Sixta was free to ask for detailed information about each step of the pilgrims' route, including details about churches, relics, geography, and peoples. Her approach to the information being presented varied considerably, according to the needs of the author. Sometimes she adopted the sort of gendered apologetics common to medieval women authors, who routinely excused their forwardness in writing; as Obermeier has noted, "they criticize themselves for their gender and then often authorize themselves with the help of God, the Master Author."[93] The character of Sixta acknowledged her own failings not only in her tiresome curiosity, but also in her "small talent" and in her desire for answers which represented a "spiritual fatigue" for her brother. Suriano responded, "that you acknowledge a fault where there is none greatly edifies me, confirming in my heart what I have always heard of you."[94] But these apologetics do not limit Sixta's assertiveness throughout the text. She asked questions, for example, which were not entirely relevant to spiritual needs: "I have always heard that pilgrims who go to visit these holy places, besides the perils of the sea, have great expenses in money. Hence I pray you to tell me how much each one has to pay for the whole pilgrimage."[95] She also became directive at times, adopting a dictatorial tone incompatible with her earlier apologies: "It seems to me that you have said enough about the conditions on the outside of the church; it remains to tell me about the position inside."[96]

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[92] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 38; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 20: "Ma tu te dimosti (*sic*) molto benigno, de cossì humanamente satisfarme."

[93] Anita Obermeier, *The History and Anatomy of Auctorial Self-Criticism in the European Middle Ages* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 251.

[94] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 21; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 3: "…questa fatica spirituale…mio piccolo ingegno…ma piochè cognosci la colpa dove la non è, ne ho summa edifficatione, confirmandome nel animo quello che di te sempre ho udito."

[95] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 33; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 16: "Ho inteso sempre che li pelegrini li quali vano ad visitare quelli sancti loci oltra el pericolo del mare hanno grande spesa de danari. Unde te prego me dichi quanto paga ziascuno per tuta la sua peregrinatione."

[96] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 46; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 28: "Parme bastare haver dicto le circumstantie dela chiesa dal canto de fori; resta che me dichi el sito dal canto de dentro."

Suriano's character, too, navigated between the danger of women's curiosity and the spiritual benefits of a visit to Jerusalem. His descriptions of the Holy Land might have been used by cloistered women to guide an imaginative journey, but they also provided pragmatic details from the stance of a firsthand observer, much as other pilgrim narratives of the fifteenth century did.[97] Indeed, he reminded the reader that his descriptions come from an eyewitness long familiar with the region: "Since I have been in all the undermentioned places, and had wished to examine them with every care, I believe I warrant credence for what I write."[98] He even skipped over descriptions of places he had not personally toured, acknowledging gaps in his firsthand knowledge.[99] He included a wide variety of practical suggestions for pilgrims, and even offered extended descriptions of the peoples living in the Holy Land, up to an including long explanations of Islamic belief and culture which, while neither entirely accurate nor consistently respectful, were surprisingly detailed attempts to describe both doctrine and ritual.[100] But this focus on the concrete reality of the Holy Land meant that his descriptions were at times unsuited to the needs of the cloistered women he was supposedly addressing. After all, if they were never going to travel and their curiosity was spiritual, why would Sixta and her community have wanted to know the approximate monetary cost of a Jerusalem pilgrimage?

In fact, Suriano's pragmatic and factual take on his subject, combined perhaps with a desire to appeal to his intended audience, lead him not only to dwell on unnecessary mundanities, but also to describe the presence of flesh-and-blood women in the real Holy Land. The history of women in the Holy Land, for example, was a regular subject of his scrutiny. St. Helena, mother of the emperor Constantine and putative founder of Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land, is a prominent figure in Suriano's dialogue. He described her pilgrimage

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[97] Elka Weber, *Traveling Through Text: Message and Method in Late Medieval Pilgrimage Accounts* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 89–90, 161.

[98] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 183; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 171: "Per esser stato in tuti li soprascripti lochi, et cum ogni diligentia volutoli vedere, credo darai fede al mio scrivere…"

[99] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 145; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 131.

[100] Bellorini and Hoade omit the text of this chapter in their translation, but Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, ch. VII, 205–206, which covers topics such as Friday prayers, Ramadan, and expectations about Paradise, is an excellent example of these detailed—and seemingly extraneous—descriptions of Islamic practice and belief.

as "inspired by God and guided by the Holy Ghost,"[101] and mentioned a fresco bearing her image and her involvement in the enclosing of the Holy Sepulcher.[102] Similarly, he offered an especial focus on the life of the Virgin. He dwelled at length on the Church of the Nativity and expounds on the spiritual refreshment available there,[103] and described in equal detail the tomb of the Virgin, miracles and visions that had occurred there, and the deep devotion of Muslim women to the Virgin herself.[104] He even mentioned in passing the location of the home of St. Elizabeth, despite the fact that it is no longer standing.[105]

None of these devotions to female figures are unusual for Jerusalem pilgrims or for late medieval religious of any gender, but the detail with which Suriano spoke to a female audience about the women of the New Testament and the Late Antique takes on more significance in light of Suriano's keenness to describe contemporary female pilgrims, as well. He asserted his belief that for those women who *were* free to travel, the desire to visit the Holy Land was a divinely-inspired one: "I wish you to know that the great sanctity of Christ and its fragrance and odour, with which all that region is redolent, has increased and multiplied…at the present time it is diffused throughout the world, so that it never ceases to attract to itself men *and women*"[106] (emphasis mine). For example, he not only made a rare (indeed, only one of two) mention of the women's hospital outside the Holy Sepulcher, he also spoke of its origins as a foundation *by* women: "The first hospital was built by a noble matron to lodge poor pilgrims, to whose well-being she and many other noble ladies, for their devotion and merit, dedicated

[101] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 43; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 26: "Sancta Helena matre de Constantino, inspirata da Dio et guidata da lo Spirito Sancto…"

[102] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 47, 49; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 30, 32.

[103] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 134–37; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 121–124.

[104] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 112–114; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 99–102.

[105] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 147; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 133.

[106] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 29; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 12: "Voglio che tu sapi, como da la grande sanctità de Christo, et redolentia et odor de quella, de la quale tuta quella regione è piena, in tanto è cresciuta et moltiplicata, non solum in quella primitiva chiesia, ma *etiam* nel tempo presente se è sparso per tuto el mundo, in tanto che non cessa mai de attrahere ad se homini et donne."

themselves: and this was not a very big hospital."[107] He also noted the presence of the Franciscan Tertiaries in Jerusalem, the purposes they served, and even the respect accorded them by Muslims:

> The monastery of our Tertiaries is, as said, 50 bracchia from mount Sion, in which dwell 4 or 6 elderly Tertiaries who are kept by the friars, because they serve them. They make the bread for all the convents, they wash the linen for the sacristy and the refectory and look after the fowl and such things. But the main reason why the Friars have them is to care for the women pilgrims who continually come to Jerusalem. These Tertiaries, to the confusion of evil and vicious Christians, are much honored and respected by the Saracens; and nobody would dare to say to them a bad word, be they old or young, alone or accompanied, in the city or in the country. And this respect they generally show to all women, Christian, Jew, and Moslem. And so the Tertiaries go securely to 'Ein, Karim, Bethany, and Bethlehem and throughout the city without guide or companion. Nevertheless in this place, for honesty's sake and for appearances and to avoid any suspicion, only elderly women of good life are kept.[108]

Suriano also mentioned the presence of female religious other than the Tertiaries, including the nuns at the House of St. Anne and those at the Church of the Ascension on Mt. Olivet.[109] Taken together, Suriano's repeated references to and defenses of early Christian and contemporary women in the Holy Land began to make his apologies for the curiosity of women ring hollow. His wish to shame any Christian

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[107] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 44; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 27: "Lo primo hospitale fo edifficato da una nobile matrona per albergar li poveri pelegrini. Al circuito de li quali, lei cum molte altre nobile donne, per lor devotione, e merito, se havevano dedicate, e questo non era troppo grande hospitale."

[108] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 131; on teriaries, see also p. 78–9. See also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 118: "Lo monasterio de le Bizoche nostre è appresso Monte Syon, cinquanta braza, como te ho dicto de sopra; in lo qual stano quatre o sei Bizoche attempate, le qual sono alimentate da Monte Syon, perchè servono alli Frati. Loro fano lo pane per tuti li lochi, fano le bugate de la sacristia, e de la canava, governano li polli e simele cosse. Benchè la principal causa che li Frati le tengono, si è per receptare le done peregrine che vengono in Hierusalem continuamente. Queste Bizoche a confusion de li cativi e viciosi christiani, sono molto honorate e resguardate da Saraceni; e nullo saria ardito dirli una mala parola, o vechia o zovane che ella sia, o sola o compagnata in la cità, o nel contado. E questa riverentia portano generalmente ad tute le done, sì christiane, Iudee, o machometane che siano. Et per questa causa le Bizoche vano secure in Montana Iudea, Bethania, et Bethleem, e per tuta la cità, senza guida o conpagnia; nientedimeno in quello loco, per honestà et ogni bon respecto, per levar ogni suspicione, non se tengono salvo donne de tempo, de bon vita, et optimi costumi."

[109] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 104–5, 118; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 92, 105.

who would speak ill of the Tertiaries certainly makes sense given his audience of nuns, but that hardly required him to discuss the relative safety of Christian women who went there on pilgrimage. By combining this assurance of safety with the discussion of lodging and care for women, Suriano advertised more than mere spiritual seeking; at times he appears to have issued an open invitation to female pilgrims to come to Jerusalem.

At the same time, Suriano had no illusions that the specific women for whom he was writing would visit the Holy Land. Their participation would be strictly imaginative. We have already seen that he carefully framed the work as a form of spiritual or textual seeking, and his understanding of this textual-based approach as a remedy for the nuns' cloistration. But the *Treatise* also suggested that this intensely-imagined spiritual travel would be equally efficacious as the physical sort, where it came to the spiritual benefits to the pilgrim. Sister Sixta, for example, was portrayed as having gained spiritual benefit from her imagined procession around the Holy Sepulcher. Upon its completion, she said "Great spiritual consolation you have given us in this most devout procession, and I believe it will not pass without great fruit."[110] In an exchange between the interlocutors near to the end of the text, Suriano compares physical and spiritual seeking in light of his readers' cloistered lives:

> SISTER. How happy you are, my dearest Brother; this privilege you merited to have from God, not only because you have trodden these most holy places, but also because twice you had them in your care and custody. Happy are your eyes that they have become worthy to see such glorious mysteries of our redemption and Christian faith. Blessed was that mother who merited that the fruit of her womb should be dedicated to the service of the treasures of God on Earth. In what great content can you live in the future, my dearest brother? With what joy must you render thanks to the Almighty for this great gift? I have no doubt, Brother, but that you have accumulated numberless graces and spiritual rewards if I only on hearing them recounted, am all on fire with spiritual fervor. Were it possible I would like to be able to see these holy and glorious places, and having seen straightaway die.
>
> BROTHER. Great is your fervor, my most beloved sister, and your burning desire for these most holy places of the merit of which I do not

[110] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 76; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 63: "Grande consolatione spirituale ce hai dato de questa deuotissima processione, e credo non passarà senza grande fructo…"

> believe you are deprived, for that you cannot see them comes only from an impossibility.[111]

This passage left little doubt that Suriano did not intend to promote physical travel for the nuns; it would be 'an impossibility,' and Sixta herself only wanted to see these places if it were, in fact, possible. If, then, Suriano was issuing an invitation or providing pragmatic advice, it was not intended for direct application by Sixta and her sisters. But at the same time, because Sixta could not travel, not only must a spiritual pilgrimage substitute for the real thing, it *could* substitute for the real thing.[112] Felix Fabri went a step further, asserting that those who took the mental pilgrimage he mapped out in *Die Sionpilger* reaped benefits superior to those enjoyed by physical pilgrims, because the indulgences they gained were granted by God, rather than by an earthly cleric.[113]

Suriano took especial pains, at the very end, to be certain his equation of the merits of spiritual and physical pilgrimage did not create confusion about which sort was appropriate for any given individual. As he concluded his treatise he took up a theme that eliminates the possibility that he might have encouraged inappropriate travel. That theme was obedience. "There is no other virtue more beneficial to man and especially to Religious," the dialogue's Suriano told Sixta, "and more pleasing to God than holy obedience." He then evoked the obedience of Abraham, the Apostles, St, Paul, the Virgin Mary, and Christ, among others. It is telling that in his final sermon on this topic, he contrasted the utility of obedience with that of another spiritual gift: sacrifice. "God prefers obedience to sacrifice, yet how pleasing sacrifice

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[111] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 110; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 97–98: "**Sora.**—Quanto sei felice, fratello mio carissimo: qual tua gratia ha meritato consequire da Dio tanto singular privillegio, non solamente par haver calpistrato quelli sanctissimi lochi, ma etiam per haverli havuti doe volte in guardia e custodia. Felici sono li toi ochii, per esser facti degni de vedere tanti gloriosi mysterii de la nostra redentione e fede christiana. Ben fo benedecta quella matre che meritò del fructo del suo ventre dedicarlo al servitio de li thesori de Dio in terra. In quanta contenteza poi giamai vivere, o carissimo fratello. Cum quanto gaudio devi de tanto beneficio referir gratie allo Omnipotente Dio. Non dubito, fratello, che per questo hai acumulato infinite gratie, e premii spirituale, quando che io odendoli commemorare, tuta me accendo de fervor spirituale. E quando fosse possibile, voria poter vedere quelli sancti lochi e gloriosi, e veduti subito morire. **Frate.**—Grando è el tuo fervor, o sorella dilectissima, et acceso desiderio de quelli sacratissimi lochi; dal merito de li quale non credo ne sei privata, perchè non procede, salvo da impossibilitade (che non li poi vedere)."

[112] Renna, "Jerusalem in Late Medieval Itineraria," 124–125, also notes this trend in Suriano's thought, as well as in Felix Fabri's.

[113] Beebe, "Mental Pilgrimage," 8.

is to him he showed when by it he was appeased when offended by his people. No sacrifice, however, is more pleasing to God than this."[114] Since sacrifice was the aspect of pilgrimage thought to be pleasing to God,[115] Suriano's message was unmistakable: better to obey, and thus not make the sacrifice of travel, than to make the sacrifice of travel through an act of disobedience.

Suriano did not expect, then, that the women for whom he was writing would visit the Holy Land, and worked to protect himself from accusations of leading them astray. However, since he felt that these women should not travel, but could gain the benefits of travel through meditation and imagination, the quality of their imaginative participation was a highly significant matter. I would argue that his love of seemingly irrelevant pragmatic detail was intended for the nuns' benefit, not as invitation or direction, but as meditative aid. Suriano's goal was to provide Sixta and her sisters with the fullest and most accurate experience of pilgrimage possible, even though they were thinking their way along the route, rather than walking along it. Beebe has noted that Fabri's *Die Sionpilger* includes "real (and sometimes unsettling) experience translated into a contemplative experience for the mental pilgrims," and that they "add to the devotional value of the *Sionpilger* text."[116] Suriano used the same strategy; the more realism he lent to his descriptions—no matter how unnecessary that information might appear—the more realistic the imagined experience could be for his readers. This strategy was most marked in his writings about the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. In this portion of the text, Suriano shifted freely and fluidly between real and imagined experiences in order to blur that distinction as much as possible for his readers and thus make their imaginative experiences more intense.

We should note that this meditative blurring of places and events appears not only in devotional texts, but also in devotional images. Katheryn Rudy has argued that the illustrators of Arsenal ms. 212 also encouraged their readers to shift from an imaginative visit to a space into the imaginative recreation of events which happened in that space.

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[114] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 245; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 254: "Niuna virtù è tanto fructosa ad ognuno, maximamente ad nui religiosi et a Dio grata, quanto la sancta obedientia…"

[115] Deborah J. Birch," Jacques de Vitry and the Ideology of Pilgrimage," in *Pilgrimage Explored*, ed. J. Stopford (York: The Medieval Press, 1999), 84.

[116] Beebe, "Mental Pilgrimage," 9.

The illuminators of the portion of that manuscript describing the Holy Sepulcher began, like Suriano, with images of the architecture of the church itself, but progressively reduced and eventually eliminated the presence of any architectural frame for their images, so that "by fol. 3v the devotee is no longer walking through the Church of the Holy Sepulcher; he is witnessing events from the Passion."[117] This erasure of boundaries, an effortless interweaving of physical and imaginative experience, is precisely the same pattern that profoundly marked Suriano's text.

Suriano recognized that his writing about the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the most sacred location in the Christian faith, would serve both as an introduction to an unfamiliar setting and as a devotional aid. Concerned that the process of learning and discovery could interfere with the imaginative work of conjuring up and occupying this new setting, he separated them, describing the setting first and leading devotional meditation after.[118]

> That I may not interrupt your image and that you may be able to contemplate the disposition of the said church on the inside and its mysteries, I wish merely to indicate them. And then at the end I shall invite you with all your companions, and accompanied by Our Lady of Sorrows and the Magdalen we shall make a visit to all of these most holy mysteries, as we Friars are accustomed to do when we show them to pilgrims who visit the Holy Land with great effusion of tears and devotion.

The detailed description which followed covered not only the information required to imagine the physical space, such as its dimensions and layout, but also mundane matters that might not have been necessary to imagine the space but which nonetheless anchored that space in physical reality, such as some of the church's history and the routines of its rituals and maintenance.[119] Only after having met his own standards for description did Suriano move on to guided meditation. This

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[117] Rudy, "A Guide to Mental Pilgrimage," 503.

[118] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 46; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 28–29: "Per non te rompere la fantasia de poter contemplar el modo de la dispositione de la predicta chiesia dal canto de dentro et li soi misteri, voglio semplicemente signarteli. E poi ne la fine te invitarò insiema con tute le toe compagne: Et acompagnando la desolata Matre, cum la Magdalena, faremo una visitatione ad tuti quelli sanctissimi misterii: Como solemo fare nui fratri quando li monstramo alli pelegrini che visitano Terra Sancta, cum grandissima effusion de lachryme et devotione."

[119] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 46–52; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 29–34.

meditation was, in his terms, an *invitation* to *make a visit*, one which would offer the same subjective experiences that a physical tour of the church might. Suriano went about the business of this guided tour exactly as he might have when leading pilgrimages around the real space when he was working in Jerusalem. He first assigned the sisters their places in the imaginative procession around the building. Here he acknowledged the real-life skills and gifts of the sisters, but also their limits, in a way that carried their real selves into his imaginative sphere. Sister Clare of Venice, for example, was assigned the role of chantress in the procession because of a real-life physical asset: "…you have a strong voice." Similarly, the Mother Abbess was required to carry the cross because of her real-life burden: "as the one who carries Jesus crucified in her heart for the burden of her Rule, so she will be worthy to carry it in public and precede the others…"[120] The interweaving of real and imagined detail here is remarkable. The Abbess' cross did not physically exist, nor would it be carried 'in public;' and although the Sister Clare may well have sung like a bird, she was, in actuality, not expected to sing at all while reading and meditating on this text in her cloister.

To lend his imaginative procession yet more much versimilitude, Suriano also had to acknowledge that none of the women who constituted the procession were allowed to preach. His solution to this was the pragmatic application of another act of imagination: he not only sent his readers to an imagined setting, he provided them with an imagined, and entirely appropriate, spiritual guide. "And since to preach is forbidden to women, no matter how holy or learned they may be, being unable to choose any of you, although this office could be fulfilled by Sister Cicilia of Perugia, who is learned in Greek and Latin letters, I entrust this office to your and our Queen, the refuge, solace, and hope of all sinners,…and in her company Magdalen and the other Marys."[121] Here Suriano evoked the skills of a living nun, one

[120] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 52; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 35: "…alego te, perchè hai la voce grossa…" and 36, "La confaloniera sarà la Madre Abatessa, la qual così como la porta Iesu Cruicifixo nel core per el peso del Regimento, così se dignarà portarlo publicamente, e priere le altre in bono odore de ogni Santità."

[121] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 52–3; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 36–37: "E perchè el sermocinare è prohibito à le donne, qualunque santa o dotta se fosse: per il che non potendo elegere veruna de vui, benchè a questa fosse sufficiente sora Cicilia de Perosa, per essere dotta in littere grece e latine, pongo a questo oficio la Regina vostra e nostra, refugio, solazio e speranza de tutti peccatori, matre de colui in honor de quale, e gloria ve preparate de visitare li mysterii de la sua

of his intended readers, in the same breath that he proposed a spiritual figure—one who had to be conjured in the imagination—should assume the leadership role. The text continued to thus mix the concrete and the imaginative, with little notice when moving from one way of thinking to the other. Instead, the touchstones of reality were intended to make the imagined setting of the Holy Sepulcher as realistic and concrete as possible.

Once Suriano had laid out the roles of the sisters in the meditative procession, he shifted away from imaginative space without warning, asking his readers to create a quiet physical setting as they read. The distractions he warned about included motion, sound, and daily chores, and they were substituted for fasting and for the more desirable experience of Suriano's imaginative Sepulcher.[122]

> …today close up the doors and grates of your parlour and banish conversation. Today close up your refectories and your kitchens: feed only the dolors of the sorrowful Mary. Today preserve among you perpetual silence. Today abstain from manual work that you may gather into the barns of your souls the abundant spiritual harvest which you shall receive form the Blessed Virgin, and from it you can live throughout the year.

Then, again without warning, Suriano returned his readers to his imaginative version of the Holy Sepulcher, only to address another real-world problem: himself. His fictive self was leading the imagined procession, but in his imagined Holy Sepulcher this masculine presence constituted a disruption for the cloistered nuns. Once again, as with placing the Virgin in charge of preaching, he offered an imaginative solution: "And that you may make your devotion without blushing at my presence, I shall conceal myself in the grotto of the Holy Sepulcher, so that when the procession is over, you shall know where to find me to answer to your humble demands."[123] The oft-voiced fear that pilgrimage was a

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acerbissima passione, chiamata per nome Maria, e la Magdalena con le altre Marie in sua compagnia."

[122] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 53; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 37: "…hogi chiudete le porte e grate de la audientia e vani coloqui. Hogi stiano serrati li refettori e cucine vostre: *solum* pascetiue de li dolori de la mesta Maria. Hogi fra vui se observi perpetuo silentio….Hogi darete a riposo alle opere manuale per congregare ne l'horea de le anime nostre abundante prebenda spirituale che da la Beata Vergine receuerete, a ciò che tutto l'anno ve possiate inde pascolare."

[123] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 53; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 37: "Et a ciò possiate fare senza vergogna de me la vostra deuotione, io me abscundo in la gropta del Sancto Sepolchro, a ciò che fornita la processione, sapi doue retrouarmi per rispondere poi alle humile dimande."

locus of inappropriate contact between men and women impinged itself on Suriano and his readers; but once again, this is a problem which is not a problem. The sisters were neither breaking their cloistration, nor walking in the Holy Sepulcher, and indeed the dialogue's Suriano was not even physically at the monastery in Foligno where the nuns were ostensibly reading his words. Nonetheless he 'hid' (in an imaginative hiding place) in an effort to make the imaginative world more rich by making it less improbable. Further, having 'hidden,' Suriano the narrator recounted a conversation he had with the Blessed Virgin Mary, in which he asked her "to enable them (the nuns) to make this holy procession devoutly and with a great compassion for the death of Her Son."[124] The text of this conversation made a sudden shift to the past tense from the present-tense frame of the dialogue between Suriano and Sixta. This too lent the procession an air of concrete reality; this discussion was framed as so entirely real that it had already happened.

The barriers between the real and the imagined became even less sturdy as the imaginative world conjured by Suriano became more complex. His reminiscence about his conversation with the Virgin marked the beginning of a series of departures from the setting of the procession around the Holy Sepulcher and into remembrances of the events that the church and the procession were intended to honor. The procession began at the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin, where the chantresses invited all humankind to join their procession. This lengthy list of invitations included a variety of social groups, including sinners, parents, secular clerics, workers, merchants, and farmers; but it is perhaps most notable for its complete invocations of states of womanhood, including mothers, nuns, virgins, spinsters, widows, and wives.[125] Once this invitation was complete, Mary's lamentation began; and her words bring the reader immediately into a third imaginative world. Within the imagined dialogue was an imagined procession, and within the imagined procession Mary recounted her memories of the events surrounding the Crucifixion. Mary was not the only character to initiate this third imaginative sphere. When the procession reached the place where Christ met the Magdalen after the Resurrection, Mary "imposed

[124] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 53; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 38: "…a poder fare questa sancta processione deuotamente e con grande compassione della passione e morte del suo Filio…"

[125] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 57; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 41–42.

silence" on the procession of nuns, "placed all the sisters around these two places," and then asked the Magdalen to preach. Mary Magdalen complicated this third level of imaginative reality; she told the story of the Last Supper at first from the point of view of one who was there, but as she recounted three petitions made by Mary, she presented them in the first person, as though she was acting out Mary's speeches (when, in the world of the imaginative procession, Mary should theoretically have been standing right there with the Magdalen and the nuns.) After presenting three of these petitions, the Magdalen slipped back into her own presence at the Last Supper, and recalled that "the Master motioned me to leave, and as I withdrew he remained alone with his mother..... But I did not go too far, and secretly observed what they were doing..." Because she remained hidden, she was able to recount further sorrowful conversation between the two.[126] The boundaries between different imaginative settings, and between what was experienced by one person and what was experienced by another, were deliberately negligible here. The invitation to the reader to follow the lead of the Magdalen or of Mary, and insert herself into any of these situations, helps to clarify Suriano's purpose in addressing the unreal problems of cloistration or feminine preaching. The inclusion of all of these details broke down the barriers between physical reality and subjective inner experience.

This pattern of worlds-within-worlds and the elision of perspective was repeated throughout the procession. The Virgin, having reached the prison of Christ, recounted briefly that how she had a vision of the Passion after Jesus left Bethany; she expressed yet more lamentation, and then, suddenly, "I saw John, my dear nephew and son, weeping and shaking without his master!"[127] Her narrative then shifted into a first-person account of Jesus' arrest and mistreatment as recounted by John. The author made clear that the Virgin was the one relaying John's words to the reader, but her first-person phrasing represents yet another erasure of perspective and boundary. These back-and-forth

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[126] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 61; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 46: "Alhora el maestro me licentio, e scansatome, rimase solo cum la madre. Ma per esser lo amore una virtù unitiva che transmuta lo amante in amato, non me lontanando tropo, occultamente obesrvava quello che facevano, et vidi el mio maestro..."

[127] Suriano, *Treatise*, trans. Bellorini and Hoade, 64; see also Suriano, *Il tratto*, ed. Golubovich, 49: "...vidi Iohanne mio caro nepote e Filio, piagendo e pulsando senza el suo maestro!"

imaginative leaps comprised the majority of Suriano's text during the 'procession'; indeed, the presence of the nuns was rarely mentioned, and was only used to frame other scenes including a speech from the Cross by the dying Christ, as relayed by Mary.

It is unsurprising that Suriano, Fabri, and others would regard imaginative journeys as efficacious; they were, after all, a close match for the mental activity expected of those who toured the Holy Sepulcher in person. Margery Kempe is an excellent case in point. Her account of her physical procession around the Holy Sepulcher shares much with Suriano's fictive procession of nuns; although she was able to go there in person, Margery's tour of the church was similarly filled with acts of imagination. She recounted how the friars led a procession of real pilgrims (both men and women), and "as they went about, told them what our Lord had suffered in every place." Mary and the Magdalen, then, took precisely the role usually played by a friar at the real Sepulcher. But Margery also entered into realms of imagination, much as the nun-pilgrim-readers were invited to do as they read Suriano's text. "And the foresaid creature wept and sobbed so plenteously as though she had seen our Lord with her bodily eye.... Before him in her soul she saw him verily by contemplation..."[128] The attempt by Kempe and her scribe to explain an act of imagination that had all the quality of reality nearly leads the text into self-contradictory rhetoric: the experience felt 'as if' it were physically real, but she saw Christ 'verily' (really or truly) 'by contemplation.' This imaginative world overlaid all of Kempe's physical experiences of the Holy Land, and in all cases she emphasized both the inner nature of the experience and the fact that this inner experience was so powerful that it left a sensory impression no different from physical reality, "as if Christ had hung before her bodily eye in his manhood."[129] Sobbing, crying out, and other outward tokens of this sort of imaginative engagement were commonplace among Jerusalem pilgrims.[130]

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[128] Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. Lynn Staley (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2001), 50. See also Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Sanford Brown Meech (London: Early English Text Society, 1940), 68: "& Þe forseyd creatur wept & sobbyd so plentyuowsly as Þow sche had seyn owyr Lord wyth hir bodyly ey.... Befor hir in hir sowle sche saw hym veryly be contemplacyon..."

[129] Kempe, *Book*, trans. Staley, 51; see also Kempe, *Book*, ed. Meech, 70: "...as yf crist had hangyn befor hir bodily eye in hys manhode."

[130] See for example Felix Fabri's descriptions of the behavior of pilgrims at the Holy Sepulcher, in Fabri, "Wanderings," trans. Stewart, vol. 7 & 8, 283–84; also Fabri, "Evagatorium," ed. Hassler, vol. II, 239; see also Ch. 4 of the present work.

In the end, however, Suriano presented this opportunity in ways that were far less controversial than the pilgrimage undertaken by Margery Kempe. His text, like Margery's, celebrates Holy Land pilgrimage and the imaginative reliving of the life of Christ, but unlike Margery's *Book* it seeks to enforce a sense of propriety where feminine participation is concerned. Suriano had served as a guide in both reality and imagination, and in both cases he heartily approved of pilgrimage, but he carefully recognized the limits within which pilgrimage could, and perhaps should, be experienced. Indeed, he was at times profoundly apologetic. And yet, as with all medieval apologetics, a hint of insincerity clung to Suriano's excuses. After all, Suriano insisted that his sister's pilgrimage was an impossibility, but was equally emphatic that the pilgrimages of other women were possible, desirable, and even safe.

Conclusions

Non-corporeal pilgrimage practices allowed those who could not make a trip to enjoy the benefits of the ritual. Forms of non-corporeal pilgrimage such as the hiring or appointing of proxies, the use of pilgrimage-related objects, and spiritual pilgrimages were available to men and women alike. However, to say that something was available to women does not indicate that it was specifically intended for them, or that it was more often chosen by women than by men. Thus, we should also take note that some forms of non-corporeal pilgrimage were not only open to women, but were in fact specifically designed for their use. Many pilgrimage souvenirs were intended to provide for gynecological and obstetric health; spiritual pilgrimage guides were written specifically for cloistered women's use. These ties between non-corporeal pilgrimage and female devotees deserve our attention for two reasons. First, such ties demonstrate once more that real pilgrimages could be difficult for women to undertake, but that they were nonetheless very appealing to women—hence creating a significant demand for alternative rituals. But their existence also reflects the deep ambivalence of medieval Christians about women's participation in pilgrimage. The ready availability of non-corporeal pilgrimage encouraged women's piety, and encouraged their expressions of piety through a pilgrimage-related medium; but at the same time, such rituals implied that real travel was not appropriate for women. The repeated mention of childbirth-related objects,

for example, seems not to have been intended to encourage women to travel physically. Like the tract written for Suriano's Sister, they were created so that women could experience the graces of pilgrimage from a distance.

As in other forms of women's pilgrimage, non-corporeal pilgrimage encompassed a potential social utility, as well as providing for the spiritual betterment of the woman who undertook the "journey." Those who hired proxies supported other pilgrims and pilgrimage shrines, and (as was the case in most forms of postmortem intercessory ritual) often requested prayers not only for their own souls, but for all their deceased relatives and friends. And while it may have been questionable for a woman to travel as a pilgrim, it was certainly lauded for her to have healthy children within wedlock; hence, the objects brought home by other travelers served as a way for women to participate in pilgrimage, while also helping to guarantee their male purchasers a healthy heir. The devotions of nuns, undertaken through the sedentary reading of texts or contemplation of images, served (like the prayers of all religious) to speed the souls of the dead through Purgatory. Pilgrimage under some guise, then, was always available to women, but even where it was non-corporeal, it was especially encouraged in situations where it could be made to serve the needs of others.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HOME AGAIN: CONCLUSIONS ON WOMEN AS PILGRIMS IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

For western European Christians living in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, pilgrimage offered a nearly unique opportunity. In an era where religious social status was a lifelong commitment, and the majority of religious rituals required members of the clerical class to serve as intermediaries between lay devotees and the Divine, the religious status of pilgrim was temporary and the rituals of pilgrimage were often partially directed and interpreted by the pilgrim him- or herself. Although some pilgrimage rituals were too long-term and expensive for any but the wealthy, others were brief and affordable even on the most meager of budgets; as such, pilgrimage of some kind was an option that was effectively available to the majority of the population. Furthermore, although pilgrimage offered only a temporary change in an individual's social role and daily experience, that change was profound. Committed pilgrims theoretically adopted a quasi-clerical social status, and the process of travel placed pilgrims well outside of their workaday routines. This appealing and accessible form of devotion produced an increasing flow of religious travelers who were a notable feature of the physical, economic, and spiritual landscape of the later Middle Ages, filling roadways and shrines, and leaving money, prestige, and belief in their wake.

While no perfect statistical conclusions can be drawn, the sheer volume of episodic evidence suggests that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, women may have been nearly as likely as men to take to the road as pilgrims. Women were not prohibited from engaging in the majority of pilgrimage-related activities, and they were in many ways encouraged to participate. Female pilgrims appear in a variety of texts, written by authors who held a variety of opinions about their presence. While precious few of these sources record the subjective opinions or remembrances of a female pilgrim, women's presence at pilgrimage shrines—virtually all of them—is nonetheless well-documented in the later Middle Ages. Women formed anywhere from a substantial minority to the overwhelming majority of pilgrims whose stories are recorded

in miracle collections; they were numerous enough to require gender-specific support networks in Jerusalem; they even appear to have been overrepresented among those who were forced to go on pilgrimages as a form of penance or exorcism.

In a final, roundabout sort of proof, female pilgrims were numerous enough to have been the subject of complaint and satire. These attacks remind us that although pilgrimages were held to be physically and spiritually effective for all Christians, the pilgrimages of women were highly suspect because they afforded women opportunities for unsupervised mobility. Pilgrims and other women who wandered were the basis of a flexible misogynist trope, accused of using their mobility as an opportunity to catch lovers or help others catch them, and to raise their social status through ostentatious display. Misogynist writers argued that these wandering women obtained no grace through pilgrimage that was not outweighed by the injuries they caused to their own souls and to the fabric of society through their lust, pride, greed, and deceit. Even Christine de Pizan, notable for her sympathetic views about women's social situation, saw in women's pilgrimages far more risk than benefit.

But those women who chose to become pilgrims in the face of such reproof and whose stories survive rarely seemed to think of themselves as rebels. Instead, with the help of more sympathetic male companions and writers both clerical and lay, many women who became pilgrims presented their choice as the natural outgrowth of the feminine social roles of mother or caregiver. Women who sought miracles not only trumpeted the power of the saints, they also advertised their own efficacy as mediators with the divine. Indeed, it was possible that, like Beatrice Shirley's mother, these pilgrim women might be portrayed as serving not only as intercessors, but also as spiritual and physical conduits for the grace which healed their children. In so doing they momentarily became living saints, or perhaps more correctly, living relics. Rather than threatening the well-being of their children and families, the improvement of that well-being constituted physical and undeniable proof of the virtue and efficacy of such women's pilgrimages. In telling, recording, and verifying her story with the collaboration of other who had uses of their own for that story, Beatrice's mother and others like her helped to create and publicly reinforce the idea that this quasi-sanctified stature was possible for ordinary lay women.

Where they could not frame their devotions as an extension of caregiving duties, women, and the men who supported their pilgrimages,

seem to have shielded themselves from complaint with other approved feminine traits such as silence, modesty, patience, and relative social invisibility, and also by forging flexible but durable mutual-support networks. Even on the self-serving (and hence questionable) pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem, women and their collaborators could inscribe such positive interpretations upon the public surface of their travels. Where they did not serve as negative *exempla*, they could serve as positive ones; and for all the rejection and mistreatment to which Fabri's seven matrons or Margery Kempe were subjected, in both cases they were also lauded by fellow-pilgrims as examples of divinely-inspired sacrifice and dedication. The note struck by these exempla is similar in tone to that which resounds in the lives of the saints, particularly in regards to the saints' ascetic practices. Considered in this light, Margery Kempe stood out not because she went on pilgrimage, but because she took an unusual stance in defending her choice: rather than modesty and silence, she justified her travels by means of a public display of the authority lent to her by her visionary experience. She thereby incited a wide array of emphatic responses, from belief in her proto-sanctity to accusations of madness.

Nowhere is the fragmentation of social response to female pilgrims more obvious than in those cases where the public visibility afforded by pilgrimage was imposed upon women by Church and community in order to display and to correct their problematic behavior. The practice of sending heretics, the insane, and demoniacs on pilgrimage—a practice that was more likely to be applied to women than to men—suggests two things. First, it demonstrates the remarkable flexibility of the idiom of pilgrimage: the agency and the needs of the institutional Church, the general public, the saint, and the pilgrim might vary enormously from one ritual to the next. Thus, while a woman's pilgrimage to Jerusalem might be understood as an transgression of her quotidian roles, the pilgrimage of a demoniac was designed to restore her to those same roles. But even more importantly, the use of compulsory pilgrimage on women shows that medieval Christians both clerical and lay possessed a profound faith in the efficacy of pilgrimage. Saints *could* heal the body, and indulgences *could* heal the soul, and this held true regardless of the gender of the pilgrim in question. Indeed, that power was so great that more distant versions such as spiritual pilgrimages, proxy pilgrimages, and pilgrimage-related objects multiplied, flourished, and were offered specifically to women in order to allow them the benefits of pilgrimage while avoiding any negative outcomes from physical travel.

Thus, later medieval women were left with a set of mixed messages. Pilgrimage was physically and spiritually beneficial (and indeed, at times necessary) for all Christians, but at the same time it was dangerous to their souls and to the stability of their families. While some writers doubted and others cheered, women seized this opportunity for self-directed devotion. In so doing, they took part in a growing and distinctive feminine religiosity in the later Middle Ages. Female pilgrims, while perhaps less visible and less apt to record their experiences than other later medieval women who actively sought unmediated contact with the divine, shared several traits with beguines and with female mystics who also gained prominence at that time. Mysticism, the direct experience of God through visions, was an increasingly common expression of devotion, theological exploration, and sanctity for women in the later Middle Ages, one which replaced clerical authority with that of God's direct communication. The experiences, writings, and activities of female mystics inspired doubt and discomfiture almost as often as belief.[1] Beguines, quasi-nuns most numerous in the Low Countries, formed religious communities of their own free will, with no rule and no lifetime commitment. Like pilgrims, they were largely a self-directed movement, living with minimal control by the Church hierarchy. Also like pilgrims, they were drawn from a broad swath of the social spectrum, being wealthy, middling, and destitute (often in the same community).[2] Mystics, beguines, and female pilgrims all interacted with a Christian tradition that was at times openly misogynist, but was also tremendously flexible. They all participated in forms of devotion that did not absolutely require official Church sanction or formal adoption of religious status. And all three forms of religious practice were increasingly attractive or available to women.

I would contend that all three of these forms of feminine religiosity occupied the same fracture in the dominant discourse about women and

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[1] Some important recent studies of late medieval mysticism, especially that of women, include Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1987); Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism*, Vol. 3 of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1998); Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

[2] Walter Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200–1565* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001) is an excellent overview. See also Penelope Galloway, "'Discreet and Devout Maidens': Women's Involvement in Beguine Communities in Northern France, 1200–1500," in *Medieval Women in their Communities*, ed. Diane Watt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 92–115.

their relationship with the Divine. On one hand, the Church, and in turn larger society, had many reasons to support visionaries, beguines, and female pilgrims. Their actions and claims had precedents; from the earliest Christian era women as well as men had experienced visions, formed gender-segregated communities of religiously-minded people who renounced possessions and families in favor of living simply, and gone on pilgrimage.[3] Further, all of them had a certain kinds of social utility, as they were of were of both spiritual and economic value to the Church and to lay Christians. Visionaries wrote and taught about their experiences, and also became saints whose *vitae* and miracles deepened the faith of others, and whose cults promised economic gain for their home communities. Beguinages provided haven for the surplus of women in medieval cities, charitable work for lepers, the poor, and other disadvantaged groups, and a pool of labor for the burgeoning textile industry in northern Europe. Female pilgrims both participated in activities that provided for the physical health of their families, and also (regardless of the object of their pilgrimages) provided donations to institutions which relied on the cult of the saints for their incomes. Upon their return home, they also acted, as all pilgrims did, as a part of the advertising network that upheld the efficacy and worthiness of any given shrine, thus increasing its appeal to other potential pilgrims. Like their visionary and beguine counterparts who built their understanding of their relationship with the divine on their own femininity, women who assumed this quasi-sanctified role did so based on feminine-gendered traits: motherhood, caregiving, and physicality.[4]

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[3] On early pilgrimage, see Maribel Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300–800* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), and Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering the Sacred: The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 2005). On early monasticism, see Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the desert: scripture and the quest for holiness in early Christian monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), and Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2002). On early Christian visionary activity, see Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, vol. 1 of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 1995).

[4] The classic study on visionaries and femininity remains Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast.* On the beguines and work traditionally associated with women, see Walters, *Cities of Ladies*, 76–87; see also Craig Harline, "Actives and contemplatives: the female religious of the Low Countries before and after Trent," *Catholic Historical Review* 81, no. 4 (1995): 541–567.

On the other hand, these women faced a significant source of resistance in another set of precedents: those of misogynist rhetoric, theology, and social mores. The unmediated nature of all these activities left open the question of authority, and women were emphatically not supposed to wield authority in religious matters. Unsurprisingly, a woman who did assume such authority was praised as divinely-inspired, and hence free of the usual restrictions of gender, when her actions and words were found convenient, but was questioned, doubted, or even persecuted as heterodox when they were not. As visionaries, beguines, and female pilgrims were convenient to some and not to others, the social response to their activities is distinctly fragmented. This shows clearly in the debates which raged around the 'discernment of spirits' in cases of female visionaries, and in the later medieval history of the Beguines, whose growing movement was accused of heterodoxy in the fourteenth century and continued thereafter amid suspicion and increasing outside control.[5]

But these pilgrim women were like their mystic and beguine counterparts in another crucial way. Through their actions, testimonies, and more successful collaborations with religious authorities, such women negotiated an understanding of their endeavors that moved well beyond simple acceptability or praiseworthiness and into the realms of independent social and religious power. That this was possible for visionaries is self-evident: their effects on medieval theology, Church politics, and local communities are the very reason for the large and rich body of writing about them, both medieval and contemporary.[6] Several of the most visible beguines were visionaries, but even those

[5] On female visionaries and the discernment of spirits, see Barbara Newman, "Possessed by the Spirit: Devout Women, Demoniacs, and the Apostolic Life in the Thirteenth Century," *Speculum* 73, no. 3 (1998): 733–770; Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); and Dyan Elliot, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). On the attacks against the beguines, see Simons, *Cities of Ladies*, 118–131, and Robert Lerner, *The Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), esp. Ch. 2.

[6] For examples of recent research on the broader impact of visionary activity, see Rosalynn Voaden, ed., *Prophets abroad: the reception of continental holy women in late-medieval England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1996); Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); John Wayland Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); and F. Thomas Luongo, *The Saintly Politics of Catherine of Siena* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

who were not collaborated with friendly clerics to defend and promote themselves as effective teachers and exemplars.[7] It is my hope that this study has shown this to be true for female pilgrims, who contributed to the creation of positive images of themselves, and may even have used the more negative ones to deflect social approbation away from themselves and onto an illness or possessing spirit.

But as compared to their visionary and beguine counterparts, female pilgrims were far more ubiquitous and more enmeshed in the social fabric of their local communities. Their commitment to the religious life lasted only so long as their travels—that is, anywhere from a day to roughly eighteen months, with the majority of pilgrimages falling on the briefer end of the spectrum. Once they fulfilled their vows, they returned to their households, perhaps a little more traveled or a little more devout, but in no official way distinct from their families, friends, or communities. They required the permission of that community in order to go; in some cases they became pilgrims at the compulsion of that community. The miracles they received and the public rituals they enacted were considered the devotional property of the community, to be retold as inspiration, or in support of the cult that might be a linchpin of the community. This contrasts rather sharply to the "islands of contemplation and seclusion" sought by beguines, or to the relatively secluded lifestyles of those visionaries who were treated as genuine living saints.[8] In pilgrimage, then, ordinary lay women found an opportunity to participate in the extraordinary, personal, unmediated, and at times strongly feminine Christian spirituality of the later Middle Ages. When they returned home, they sometimes raised their spiritual status and the status of female pilgrims and devout women more generally. This widely accessible version of women's religiosity was easily as familiar to the majority of late medieval lay men and women as the visions of Birgitta or the beguinages of the Netherlands. We cannot count the exact number of families or communities across Latin Europe who celebrated such women's journeys, but even so, it seems important to consider the effect women's pilgrimages had on the later medieval cultural landscape.

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[7] Simons, *Cities of Ladies*, 130–131.

[8] On the social separation of beguine communities, see Walters, *Cities of Ladies*, 61–62; on visionaries and social boundaries, see for example Aviad Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), Ch. V.

APPENDIX

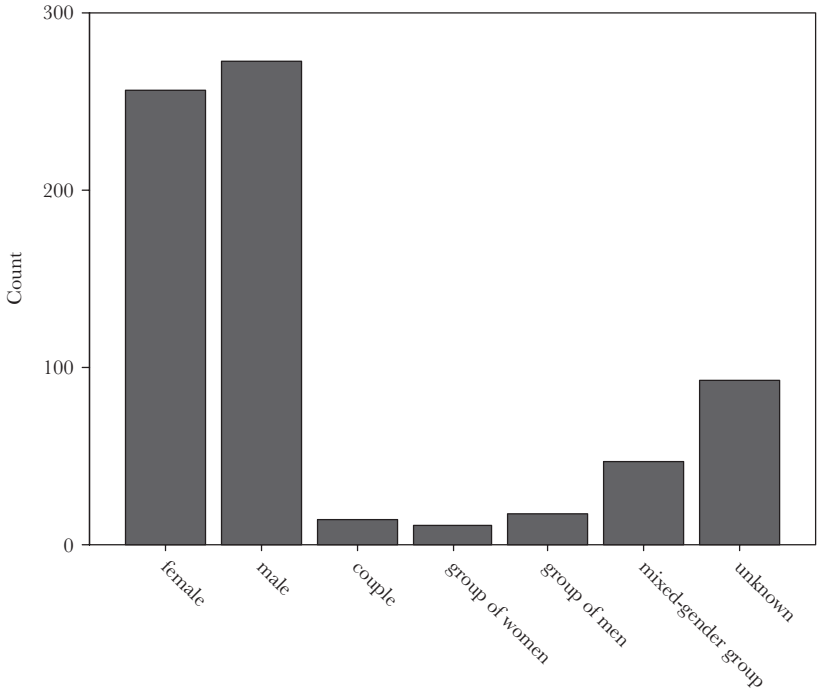

Figure 1. Gender of the suppliants in seven later-medieval miracle collections.

		Gender of the suppliant							Total
		female	male	couple	group of women	group of men	mixed-gender group	unknown	
Simone da Todi	Count	56	28	5	1	0	1	45	136
	%	41.2%	20.6%	3.7%	.7%	.0%	.7%	33.1%	100.0%
Agnes of Montepulciano	Count	15	16	1	0	0	0	11	43
	%	34.9%	37.2%	2.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	25.6%	100.0%
Yves	Count	33	35	0	0	5	4	1	78
	%	42.3%	44.9%	.0%	.0%	6.4%	5.1%	1.3%	100.0%
Dauphine	Count	10	8	0	0	0	0	0	18
	%	55.6%	44.4%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Birgitta of Sweden	Count	52	66	3	4	8	8	13	154
	%	33.8%	42.9%	1.9%	2.6%	5.2%	5.2%	8.4%	100.0%
Henry VI	Count	33	76	5	3	4	29	16	166
	%	19.9%	45.8%	3.0%	1.8%	2.4%	17.5%	9.6%	100.0%
Dorthea of Montau	Count	57	44	0	3	0	5	7	116
	%	49.1%	37.9%	.0%	2.6%	.0%	4.3%	6.0%	100.0%
Totals	Count	256	273	14	11	17	47	93	711
	%	36.0%	38.4%	2.0%	1.5%	2.4%	6.6%	13.1%	100.0%

Figure 2. Gender of the suppliants, according to saint providing the miracle.

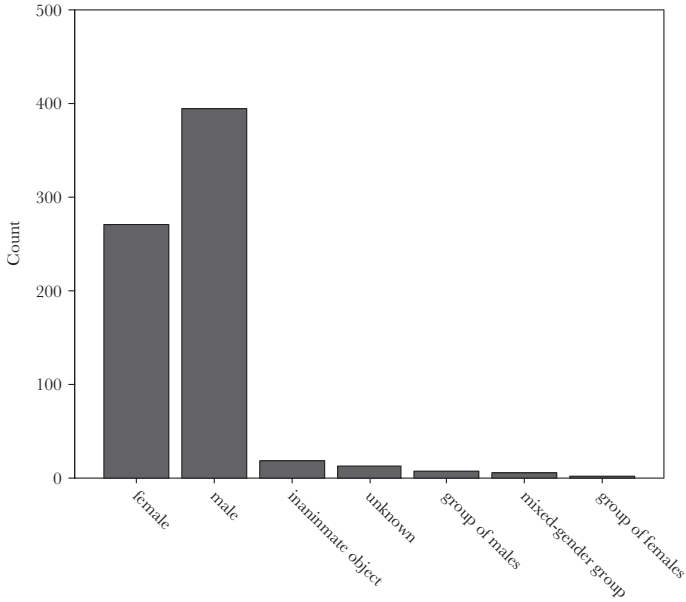

Figure 3. Gender of the subjects of miracles in seven late-medieval miracle collections.

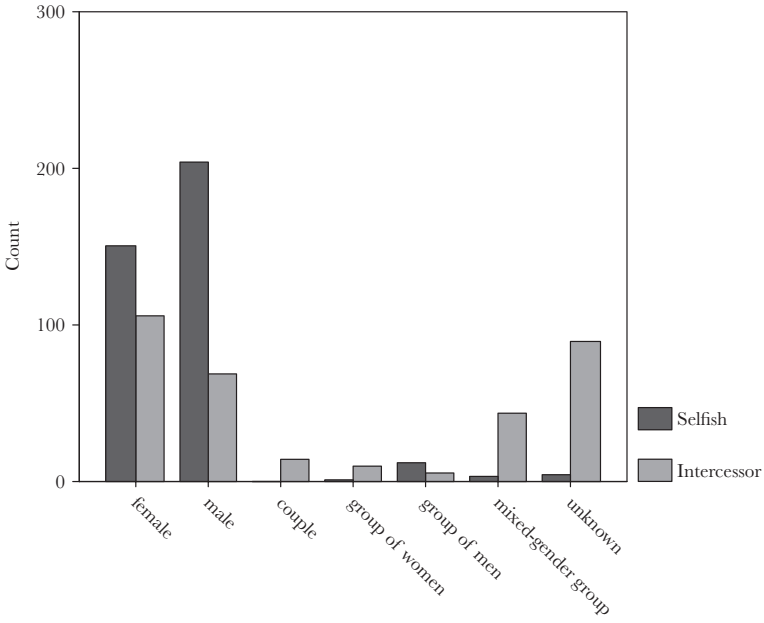

Figure 4. Suppliants as selfish actors and as intercessors in seven miracle collections, by gender.

		Self-Serving Women	Women as Intercessors	Self-Serving Men	Men as Intercessors
Simone da Todi	# of cases	36	21	21	6
	% by gender	63.2%	36%	77.8%	22.2%
Agnes of Montepulciano	# of cases	10	5	12	4
	% by gender	66.7%	33.3%	75%	25%
Yves	# of cases	12	21	26	9
	% by gender	36.4%	63.6%	74.3%	25.7%
Dauphine	# of cases	4	6	5	3
	% by gender	40%	60%	62.5%	37.5%
Birgitta of Sweden	# of cases	27	25	49	17
	% by gender	51.9%	48.1%	74.2%	25.8%
Henry VI	# of cases	17	16	56	20
	% by gender	51.5%	48.5%	73.7%	26.3%
Dorthea of Montau	# of cases	45	12	34	11
	% by gender	78.9%	21.1%	77.3%	22.7%
TOTAL	# of cases	151	106	203	70
	% by gender	58.8%	41.2%	74.4%	25.6%

Figure 5. Suppliants as selfish actors and as intercessors in each of the seven collections, by gender.

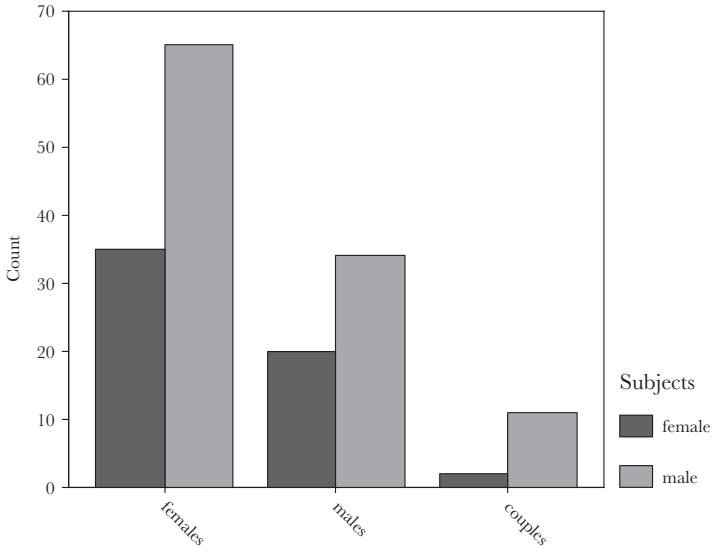

Figure 6. Gender of the subject in cases of intercession in seven late-medieval miracle collections.

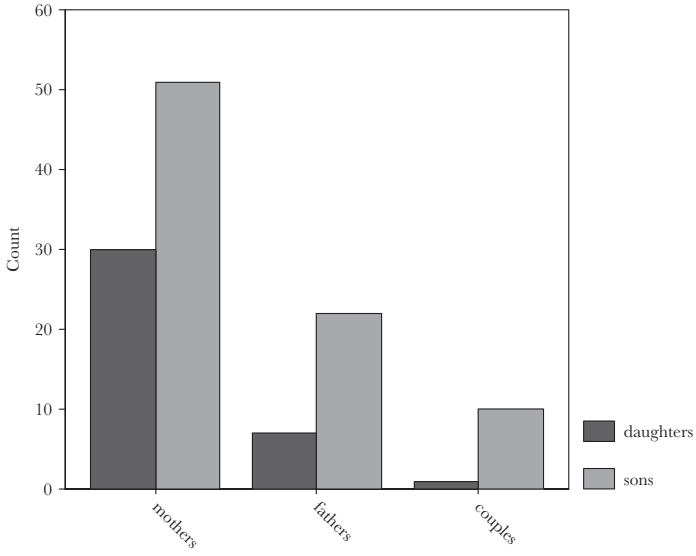

Figure 7. Gender of the subject of miracles, where parents act as intercessors for their children in seven late-medieval miracle collections.

		Type of miracle							Total
		Healing of Illness	Healing of Injury	Healing of *Sine Sensu*	Restoration of the Dead	Multi-Category	Negative Miracle	Averting Danger	
Female	Count	190	7	33	19	6	6	10	271
	%	70.1%	2.6%	12.2%	7.0%	2.2%	2.2%	3.7%	100.0%
Male	Count	186	61	21	53	13	20	40	394
	%	47.2%	15.5%	5.3%	13.5%	3.3%	5.1%	10.2%	100.0%
Inanimate Object	Count	4	1	0	1	4	0	9	19
	%	21.1%	5.3%	.0%	5.3%	21.1%	.0%	47.4%	100.0%
Unknown	Count	11	0	0	1	0	0	0	12
	%	91.7%	.0%	.0%	8.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Group of Males	Count	0	0	0	1	0	0	7	8
	%	.0%	.0%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	.0%	87.5%	100.0%
Mixed Group	Count	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	6
	%	33.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	66.7%	100.0%
Group of Females	Count	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	393	69	54	75	23	26	71	711
	%	55.3%	9.7%	7.6%	10.5%	3.2%	3.7%	10.0%	100.0%

Figure 8. Types of miracles conferred in seven late-medieval miracle collections, by gender of the subject.

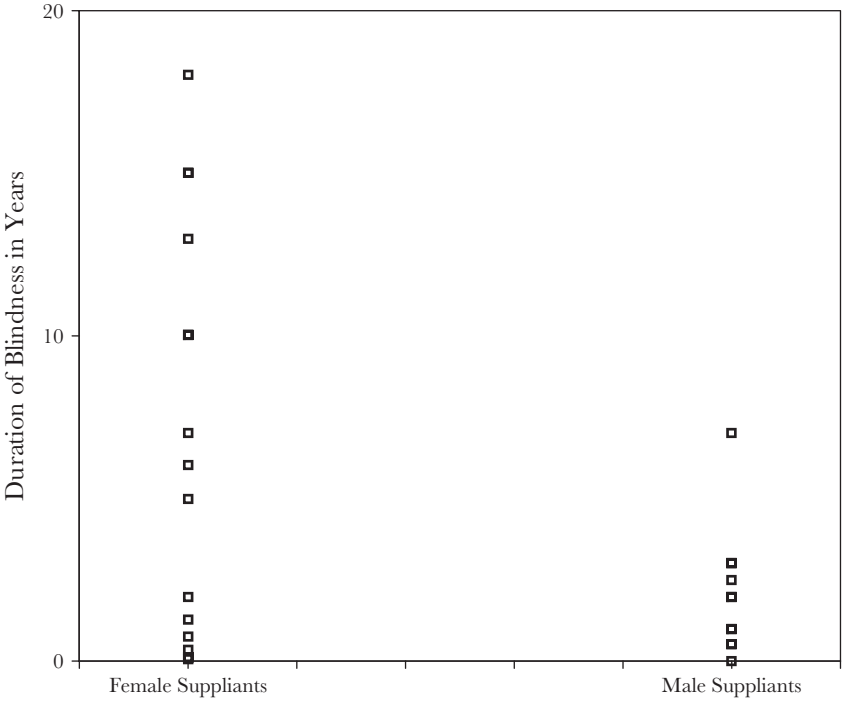

Figure 9. The duration of blindness in male and female suppliants in seven late-medieval miracle collections.

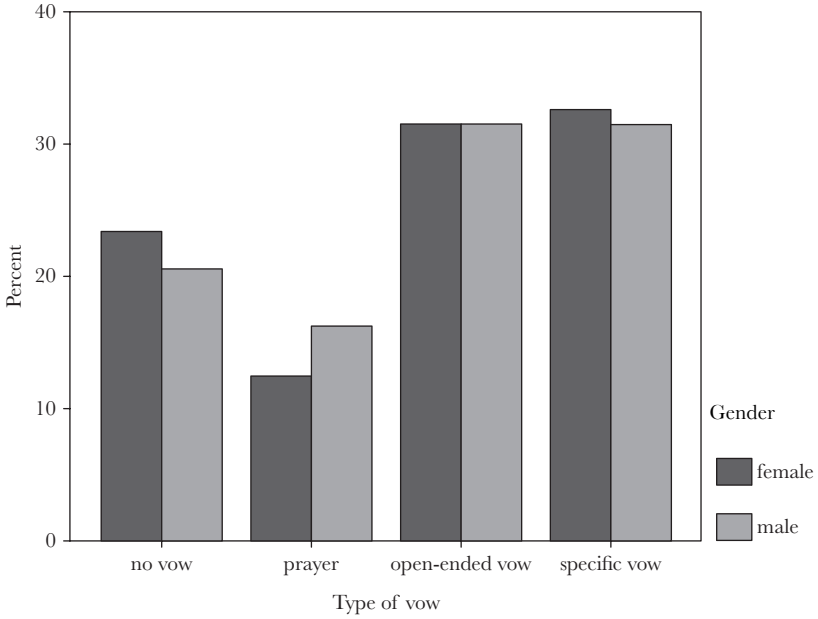

Figure 10. Specificity of vows taken by all male and female suppliants in seven late-medieval miracle collections.

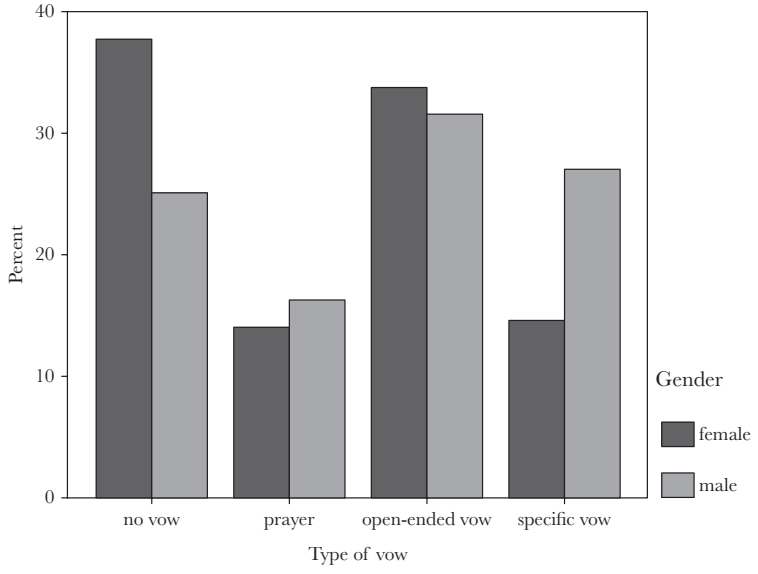

Figure 11. Specificity of vows taken by self-serving male and female suppliants in seven late-medieval miracle collections.

		No Vow	Prayer	Nonspecific Vow	Specific Vow
Simone da Todi	female	28	1	5	2
	pilgrims	77.8%	2.8%	13.9%	5.6%
	male	14	1	3	3
	pilgrims	66.7%	4.8%	14.3%	14.3%
Agnes of	female	6	2	1	1
Montepulciano	pilgrims	60%	20%	10%	10%
	male	4	1	2	5
	pilgrims	33.3%	8.3%	16.7%	41.7%
Yves	female	0	4	2	6
	pilgrims	0%	33.3%	16.7%	50%
	male	2	3	9	12
	pilgrims	7.7%	11.5%	34.6%	46.2%
Dauphine	female	2	0	0	2
	pilgrims	50%	0%	0%	50%
	male	0	0	0	5
	pilgrims	0%	0%	0%	100%
Birgitta of	female	9	4	11	3
Sweden	pilgrims	33.3%	14.8%	40.7%	11.1%
	male	17	8	15	9
	pilgrims	34.7%	16.3%	30.6%	18.4%
Henry VI	female	1	7	2	7
	pilgrims	5.9%	41.2%	11.8%	41.2%
	male	5	17	15	19
	pilgrims	8.9%	30.4%	26.8%	33.9%
Dorthea of	female	11	3	30	1
Montau	pilgrims	24.4%	6.7%	66.7%	2.2%
	male	9	3	20	2
	pilgrims	26.5%	8.8%	58.8%	5.9%
TOTALS	female	57	21	51	22
	pilgrims	37.7%	13.9%	33.8%	14.6%
	male	51	33	64	55
	pilgrims	25.1%	16.3%	31.5%	27.1%
	all	108	54	115	77
	pilgrims	30.5%	15.3%	32.5%	21.8%

Figure 12. Specificity of vows taken by self-serving male and female suppliants, in each of in seven late-medieval miracle collections.

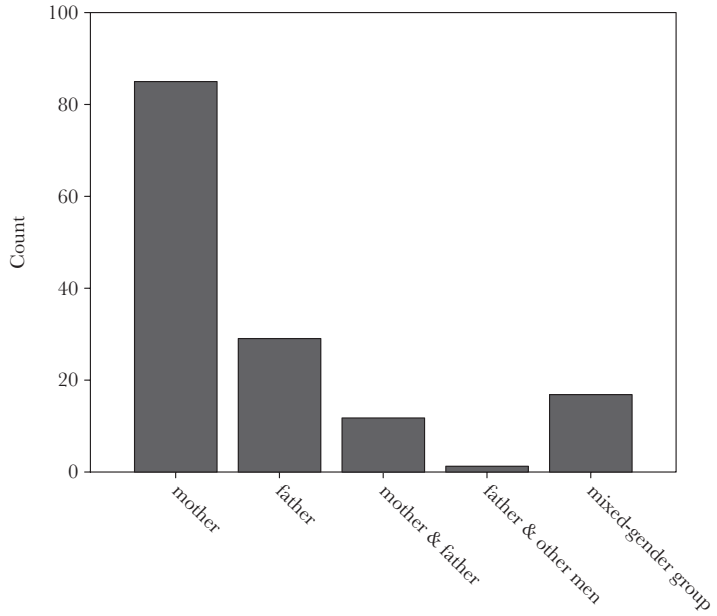

Figure 13. The gender of parents who acted as intercessors in seven late-medieval miracle collections.

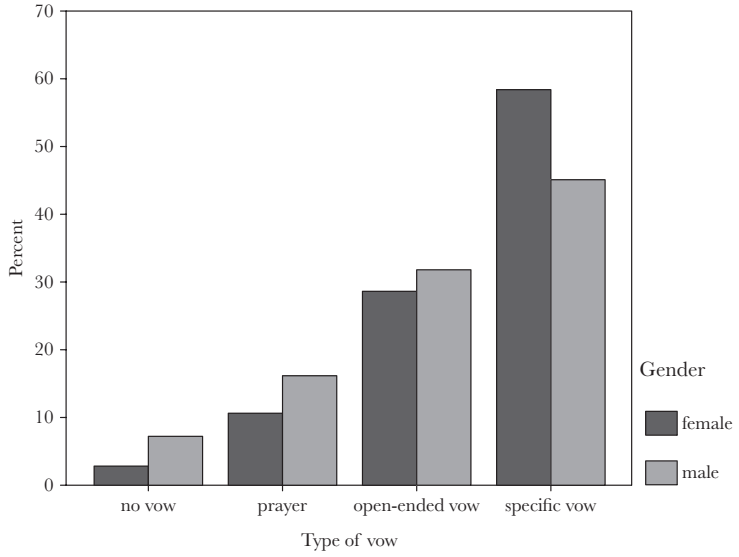

Figure 14. Types of vows taken by male and female intercessors in seven late-medieval miracle collections.

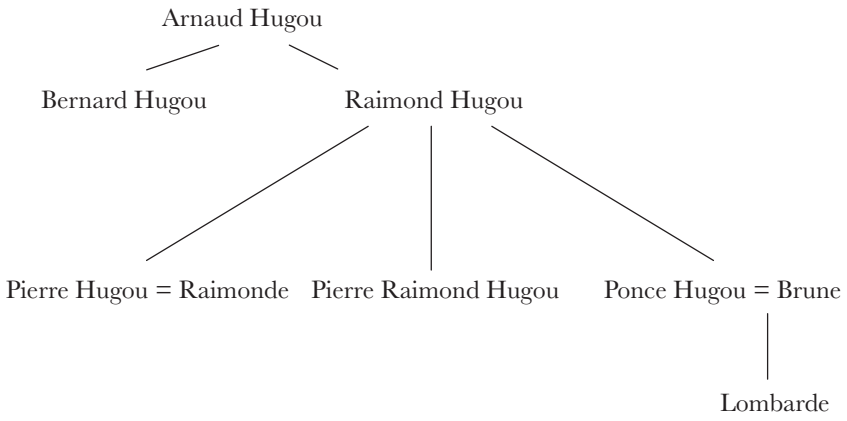

Figure 15. The convicted heretics of the Hugou family of Bugnac prés Tarabel, 1310–1319.

		Type of Behavioral Aberrance		Totals
		Cures of Possession	Cures of Insanity	
Gender	female	10	3	13
	male	4	5	9
Total		14	8	22

Figure 16. Types of behavioral aberrance among compulsory pilgrims to six saints' shrines, according to the gender of the subject.

		Level of Force		Totals
		"led to shrine"	"led by force"	
Gender	female	5	8	13
	male	7	2	9
Totals		12	10	22

Figure 17. Levels of force applied to compulsory pilgrims to six saints' shrines, according to the gender of the subject.

Sentence	Men	Women
Death	76.7%	23.3%
Imprisonment	63%	36.9%
Crosses & Pilgrimages (all)	58%	42%
First Offense	53.9%	46.1%
Parolee	63.7%	36.3%
Overall	60.5%	39.4%

Figure 18. Distribution of sentences by gender in Bernard Gui's *Sententiae*, based upon the appendices of Annette Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences de l'inquisiteur Bernard Gui, 1308–1323* (Paris, CNRS Editions, 2002), vol. II, 1645 ff.

		Pilgrimage w/o Crosses	Single Crosses	Double Crosses	Removal of Crosses	Tongue & Crosses	Totals
Female	Count	9	37	26	10	0	82
	%	11.0%	45.1%	31.7%	12.2%	.0%	100.0%
Male	Count	8	39	37	6	6	96
	%	8.3%	40.6%	38.5%	6.3%	6.3%	100.0%
Totals	Count	17	76	63	16	6	178
	%	9.6%	42.7%	35.4%	9.0%	3.4%	100.0%

Figure 19. Sentences of pilgrimage among non-parolees in Bernard Gui's *Sententiae*, according to the gender of the heretic, again based upon the appendices of Annette Pales-Gobillard, ed., *Le livre des sentences de l'inquisiteur Bernard Gui, 1308–1323* (Paris, CNRS Editions, 2002), vol. II, 1645 ff.

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